



Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Kuwait Supports Renomination of Arab League Chief

LD0412171795 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1615 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 4 Dec (KUNA) — The State of Kuwait has informed the Arab League today of its consent to renominate Dr. 'Isamat 'Abd al-Majid for the position of secretary general of the [Arab] League for a period of five more years, starting from next May.

Counsellor Majdi al-Dhufayri, the Kuwaiti acting permanent envoy to the Arab League, told journalists after his meeting with Dr. 'Abd al-Majid here today that Kuwait's consent for nominating Dr. 'Abd al-Majid for this post came as an expression of its appreciation for his expertise and political experience, and for the role he played at the Arab and international levels to defend Arab issues.

Al-Dhufayri added that Kuwait hoped that during his second term in office Dr. 'Abd al-Majid will continue the efforts he started for the creation of an Arab world based on the principles of respect, nonintervention in internal affairs, and consecrating Arab countries' respect for the League's charter. [passage omitted]

Damascus Declaration Foreign Ministers To Meet

JN0512082895 Manama WAKH in Arabic
0700 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Muscat, 5 Dec (WAKH) — The foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states will hold a two-day meeting in Damascus on 27 December.

In its issue today, the Omani AL-WATAN daily cites Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa as saying that his country received an official invitation from Syria to participate in the meeting. He said Egypt will present a working paper on how to activate the articles of the Damascus Declaration and implement what was agreed upon in the previous Cairo and Manama meetings.

He stressed the importance of the Damascus meeting, especially in the wake of the Gulf Cooperation Council summit, which opened in Muscat yesterday. He said that on the economic front, the meeting will discuss a number of cooperation projects worth \$500 million among the Damascus Declaration states.

On whether Lebanon will join the Damascus Declaration states, Musa said that Syria will raise this subject at the meeting.

He said that Egypt will raise the issue of regional security, especially after the Russian-Israeli military

nuclear cooperation agreement, which he said will disrupt regional military balance.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Confers With Israeli Labor Party Secretary

JN0212195295 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
1900 GMT 2 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received Nisim Zvili, Israeli labor party secretary, at the Presidential Office in the city of Gaza this evening. They discussed latest developments in the peace process, current efforts to redeploy the Israeli occupation army outside of Palestinian cities, and the deployment of the Palestinian National Security Forces. Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh and 'Arafat's adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah attended the meeting.

'Abbas 'Does Not Expect Great Change' Under Peres

MM0112154295 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
1 Dec 95 p 5

[Report by Rashid Khashanah: "Abu-Mazin: We Used the Chief of Staff's Helicopter To Travel to Rabin's Home To Offer Our Condolences"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis — Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin), PLO Executive Committee member, has revealed that President Yasir 'Arafat and the delegation accompanying him to the home of former Israeli Premier Yitzhaq Rabin to present condolences traveled in the Israeli chief of staff's helicopter from Gaza to a small airport near Tel Aviv.

In a statement in Tunis yesterday, he explained that the delegation traveled to Rabin's home in cars under the protection of special Israeli Army units and entered the house through the back door.

He said that he "does not expect a great change in the Israeli Government's direction after Shim'on Peres has become prime minister, since the team working with Peres today is almost the same as the previous one," adding: "Peres has continued implementing what we previously agreed with regard to the redeployment and the organization of the Palestinian elections." He added: "If the main objective behind Rabin's assassination was to stop the process of the Israeli army's withdrawal (from the West Bank), what has been achieved after his assassination confirms that Peres, like us, is determined to thwart all plans aiming at hampering the implementation of the Washington agreement (Oslo-2)."

PA Official Discusses Elections, Redeployment

NC0412114795 *Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic*
0610 GMT 4 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with 'Abd-al-Hafiz al-Ashhab, PA minister of post and telecommunications, in Hebron, by Fayiz al-Miliji, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Miliji] We would like your excellency to give us an outline of the election law that will be used in the Palestinian self-rule areas and that will govern the elections on 20 January 1996.

[Al-Ashhab] The Palestinian Election Law was passed during a meeting of the Palestinian Authority [PA]. President 'Arafat will issue it in the form of a special law and it will be published in the official gazette. The law divides the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into 16 constituencies, five in Gaza and 11 in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, which is an independent electoral constituency. The 82 seats of the proposed Palestinian council have been distributed among these constituencies according to their populations or number of registered voters.

[Al-Miliji] Could you give us a picture of the preparations for the elections?

[Al-Ashhab] Voter registration will continue until 10 December. Between 10 and 20 December those who wish to run for membership of the Palestinian council can declare their candidacies. Between 20 and 30 December the lists of candidates will be published so that any member of the public who wishes to object can do so. The deadline for accepting candidacies is the end of December. The election campaign will begin on 1 January and end on 19 January, one day before the election.

[Al-Miliji] Minister, will the Palestinian factions opposed to the Oslo and Oslo B agreements take part in the elections?

[Al-Ashhab] The PA has been conducting a dialogue with the factions opposed to Oslo, particularly Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP]. The dialogue is not over. But the general trend is that the brother oppositionists will participate in voting although they have reservations about fielding candidates. The PA Council had a three-hour meeting with representatives of all the opposition factions and other political figures from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. A consensus was reached that the elections are a national right that all citizens must exercise as a step toward self-

determination and an independent Palestinian entity [Kiyani].

[Al-Miliji] Your Excellency, who of the PA and opposition leaders attended this meeting?

[Al-Ashhab] All the PA cabinet members were present, except those who had prior engagements. Representatives from the opposition Hamas and the PFLP attended the meeting. Islamic Jihad and the DFLP did not attend. There were also several independent political figures who oppose the Oslo agreement but still attended the meeting. The PA and the opposition agreed that there was a need to expand the base of national unity. Hence, there is a trend, which will become clearer in the next two weeks, toward all the factions participating in the elections.

[Al-Miliji] Minister, let us move on to another issue, namely, the Israeli forces' redeployment in the West Bank. It is now Bethlehem's turn. What is new in this regard?

[Al-Ashhab] When the first group of Palestinian security forces entered the Bethlehem area, which includes Bayt Jala and Bayt Sahur, an hour ago, it was received in a festive manner. The 12-man group consisted of officers, noncommissioned officers, and enlisted men. They took up their positions with the Liaison Committee in Bayt Jala.

[Al-Miliji] When will the redeployment take place?

[Al-Ashhab] The redeployment will take place on 18 December. Bethlehem, Bayt Jala, and Bayt Sahur and their immediate vicinities will be evacuated of the Israeli presence on 18 December. Christmas Eve ceremonies this year will be celebrated under the aegis of the Palestinian flag. President 'Arafat will attend these ceremonies.

[Al-Miliji] President 'Arafat will go to Bethlehem to take part in Christmas celebrations?

[Al-Ashhab] Yes, this is almost certain, or rather certain. This is already known in the West Bank.

[Al-Miliji] What are conditions like in the other towns from which the Israeli forces have withdrawn?

[Al-Ashhab] Things are very good. The PA authorities have assumed all civilian and security tasks in them. Tulkarm, Qalqiliyah, and Nablus will be evacuated this month. Bethlehem will be evacuated on 18 December and Ramallah on 28 December.

[Al-Miliji] What really happened during a recent incident we have heard about?

[Al-Ashhab] It was a result of the fast-breaking developments. Israeli forces besieged a coffee shop in 'Anabta, an area under PA control, on the pretext that a wanted man was inside. Young friends of the wanted man detained two Israelis to make their comrades lift the siege. This is what happened. The two Israeli troops were released and the Israeli forces lifted the siege. The incident was over.

[Al-Miliji] Thank you, Minister.

[Al-Ashhab] You are welcome.

Ministry Denounces Israel's Land Shoveling

*JN0412145895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
1400 GMT 4 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Information Ministry denounced the Israeli occupation authority's military bulldozers shoveling the lands of the al-Sawiyah village near 'Ali settlement.

In a statement issued today, the ministry said the Israeli measures violate the accord on the second stage of the Declaration of Principles agreement. It said a Palestinian Information Ministry team took part along with al-Sawiyah people in confronting the Israeli bulldozers and forcing them to retreat.

DFLP To Form 'Democratic Action' Party in Israel

*JN0312145395 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 3 Dec 95
p 21*

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Palestinian sources in the West Bank revealed that the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], led by Nayif Hawatimah, has almost completed arrangements for establishing a pro-DFLP party in Israel called the Democratic Action Organization [munazzamat al-'amal al-dimuqratiyah].

The party membership, which is now based in Yafo, is composed of a Jewish majority in addition to Arabs of Israeli nationality.

The DFLP adopted a decision to establish this political party in one of its conferences three years ago.

The new party will be the heir to the Israeli organization Path of the Spark [tariq al-shararah] which had connections with the DFLP.

According to Israeli laws, any party which wants to operate in the open must submit an application to the Israeli Government. It will have the right to present its election platform and if it wins seats in the Knesset, the Israeli Government will allocate financial assistance to it according to the size of its representation in the

Knesset, a system which applies even to small Israeli religious parties.

DFLP Denies Taking Part in Elections Law Meeting

*JN0312183595 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian
Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 3 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] The official spokesman of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] categorically denied reports promoted by circles of the limited administrative self-rule authority in Gaza that a DFLP representative took part in the authority's meeting yesterday during which the so-called self-rule council elections law was approved. These elections are stipulated in the treasonous Taba agreement within the framework of implementing the Oslo agreement.

The official spokesman said that the DFLP adheres to its position of boycotting the elections. He noted that the DFLP did not discuss the elections law because it considers it a product of the Taba agreement that is constrained by its provisions. He added that the DFLP objects to the agreement per se and not to formal aspects of it, which do not change the fact that these elections are undemocratic and unfree.

PFLP Meetings Said To Affirm Boycott of Elections

*TA0412151395 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic
4 Dec 95 pp 1, 22*

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] Central Committee began its meetings in Damascus yesterday to discuss organizational and political issues, the most important of which is the PFLP's stance on the Palestinian elections slated to be held on 20 January.

Organizational sources in the PFLP affirmed that the Central Committee meetings, which are expected to last four days, will unequivocally renew the refusal by the PFLP, led by George Habash, to participate in the elections.

PFLP sources had affirmed the existence of internal discussions within PFLP ranks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The discussions centered on the PFLP's stance on the upcoming elections.

It is worth noting that the PFLP leadership has imposed organizational penalties on some of its officials because they had called for participation in the Palestinian Authority and in the Palestinian elections.

Hamas Denies Meeting With 'Arafat on Elections*JN0512100395 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic**5 Dec 95 p 24*

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — AL-DUSTUR — The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas has stated that it did not take part in the meeting between Palestinian opposition factions and Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the National Authority, to discuss the Elections Law.

In a statement yesterday, the movement said its leaders and representatives declined an invitation by Salim al-Za'nun to attend the meeting, owing to the movement's clear rejection of participating in the Oslo agreement elections.

The movement added that Khadr Mihjiz and 'Imad al-Faluji, who attended the meeting, declared that they do not represent Hamas. The movement expressed surprise that its name was mentioned at the meeting.

The news media had reported that Hamas took part in the opposition factions' meeting on the Elections Law.

Court Gives 5-Year Sentence to Black Panther Leader*TA0312183395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English**1500 GMT 3 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Palestinian military court in Jericho has handed down a five-year jail sentence to Black Panther leader Sami al-Zakarnah, who was found guilty of provoking last week's incident in Qabatiyah in which two Israeli border policemen were kidnapped. The court said al-Zakarnah illegally left Jericho with a gun which led to his arrest by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the abduction of the two border policemen by two of his friends. Israeli and Palestinian officers met today to discuss measures to prevent such incidents from recurring.

Arab-Israeli Talks**Rabinovich Holds 'Secret' Talks With Syrian Envoy***TA0512063395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew**0505 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States, met secretly in Washington with Syrian Ambassador Walid al-Mu'allim. The meeting took place several days after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports the details.

[Begin Raz recording] The break in the contacts between Syria and Israel over the past few months has not been as complete and unequivocal as previously be-

lieved. It appears that Ambassadors Itamar Rabinovich and Walid al-Mu'allim met secretly and exchanged assessments on the negotiations' prospects. Following the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, the tone from Damascus became one that is more pleasant to Israeli ears, almost the opposite of the statements that have been coming from Syria for months, ever since the talks ran aground. Ambassador Rabinovich sought to receive from Walid al-Mu'allim, his Syrian counterpart, a first-hand impression with regard to the true extent of the change in Damascus. A U.S. official was party to this meeting. Dennis Ross later arrived in Israel for talks with Prime Minister Peres and the Israeli political leadership and then returned to Washington. [passage omitted]

A senior political source, however, expressed doubt as to whether Dennis Ross is the right address through which to promote the negotiations. The political source spared the U.S. emissary no criticism. The delays in the negotiations are his fault as well, the source said. Ross was involved in the misunderstandings between Israel and Syria that caused the breakup of the officers' talks. We made peace with the Palestinians and signed a peace treaty with Jordan without Ross' help, the source added, noting that this is another reason to raise the level of the talks between Syria and Israel. This senior political source expressed limited faith in Dennis Ross as he left for Damascus yesterday. The U.S. emissary is due back in Jerusalem this evening, at which time we may learn whether there has been any real change in Syria's position, whether additional progress will follow Prime Minister Peres' upcoming meeting with President Clinton, and whether Secretary of State Christopher will visit the region, thus signaling the resumption of the negotiations. [end recording]

This morning, Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir expressed reservations about the criticism of U.S. emissary Dennis Ross by a senior political source in Jerusalem. Savir said that this criticism does not reflect the position of the officials involved in the talks.

Views Talks, Denies Bypassing Peres*TA0512072895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew**0505 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States, has reacted to the allegations in THE WASHINGTON POST's Evans and Novak column according to which he conducted direct negotiations with Syrian officials without reporting to the foreign minister, while Peres, as foreign minister, received his information about the political process from Dennis Ross instead of from Rabinovich himself.

[Begin Rabinovich recording] In THE WASHINGTON POST, Evans and Novak quote U.S. or other sources who ostensibly base themselves on Israeli sources. They also quote the prime minister by name. With regard to the latter, I can categorically state that these reports are baseless. In such negotiations, it is typical for there to be people — whether they are central to the talks, minor players, or various rumormongers — who have an agenda. This column regrettably reflects such acrobatics and not reality. [end recording]

As for the negotiations between Israel and Syria, Ambassador Rabinovich spoke to our political correspondent Shlomo Raz about the chances of progress:

[Begin recording] [Rabinovich] The current shuttle mission is very important. Since the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, the heads of the U.S. Administration and members of the peace team have already held two meetings with the Israeli leadership and government. There was no meeting at a similar level with the Syrians. Tomorrow will be the first such meeting. The negotiations must be held between the two sides with the help of the Americans, who are very familiar with the Israeli stand but not familiar enough with the updated Syrian positions. If there is indeed any chance of promoting these negotiations, such moves must be initiated in order to make these prospects viable.

[Raz] But everything is already clear. Syria and Israel have presented their positions. What reason is there for a shuttle mission? What can it possibly promote?

[Rabinovich] Well, if that was the starting point of all negotiations, then most existing agreements would have never been signed. There are many difficult moments in negotiations. There are times when everything seems deadlocked and hopeless. This is where the art of negotiations, as well as the creativeness of the negotiator and the decisionmaking ability of the political echelon, comes in. Although these negotiations have been going on for quite some time and there have been some rather interesting developments, the desired breakthrough has

not yet occurred. In the months that still remain, there is still a possibility of achieving such a breakthrough. In my opinion, whether this indeed happens depends primarily on Syria's readiness to change several parameters in its approach to the negotiations which have posed serious obstacles in the past.

[Raz] One more short question: What is Israel's position with regard to the issue of early warning stations? THE WASHINGTON POST published a report, based on Israeli sources, that Israel is prepared to adopt a more flexible stand on this issue.

[Rabinovich] Israel adheres to its position. The negotiations on the issue of early warning stations were frozen some time back in July. The issue did not even feature on the negotiating table, and all the talk about this issue and especially the direction it has taken is totally irrelevant. [end recording]

Israel Pledges To Avoid Lengthy Closures

TA0512120895 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew
5 Dec 95 p 9

[Pool report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel has pledged to avoid imposing prolonged closures on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and to facilitate as much as possible the traffic of goods and people between the territories and Egypt and Jordan. This is part of the tripartite agreement made last week between Israel, the Palestinians, and the donor countries at a conference in Washington.

The donor countries pledged to cover the Palestinian Authority's [PA] budgetary deficit for 1995, which stands at \$75 million, and to finance projects worth \$600 million in 1996. In return, the PA pledged to stop hiring policemen and administrative workers, maintain an orderly government and proper financial management, and facilitate foreign investments. [passage omitted]

Algeria**Mehri: FLN Would 'Consider' Invitation to Dialogue**

MM0512114195 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT
in Arabic 4 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Salah Jamil: "Mehri Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Will Consider Any Invitation for Dialogue"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Algiers, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, news agencies — While another Algerian journalist has lost his life as a result of the cycle of political violence, to which there seems to be no sign of a solution despite the optimism prompted by the recent presidential elections, Abdelhamid Mehri, secretary general of the National Liberation Front [FLN], has said that the recent security escalation confirms that the elections "have not yet solved the country's basic problems." [passage omitted]

Mehri added in a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that "the coming days should reveal the regime's intentions and its reading of the election results. If it regards the results as support for the past policy, that would mean further isolation. If it considers the election results a demand by the people for a different behavior, that would be a positive thing."

However, he stressed that it is not clear now what direction the regime will take.

Mehri announced that his party's leadership would consider any invitation from the regime regarding a dialogue over the crisis. He pointed out that the party has not yet received any approaches to this effect from the government. Mehri stressed the continuation of coordination among the "National Covenant" parties, and expects this coordination to expand in the stage ahead, especially with regard to the awaited dialogue between the regime and political leaders. [passage omitted]

Commission To Reduce Price Subsidies in 1996

LD0412141495 Algiers ENTV Television Network
in Arabic 1200 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Transitional National Council's financial and budget commission met this morning to discuss amendments to the 1996 draft budget in the presence of Ahmed Benbitour, the finance minister, and Ali Brahiti, the minister delegate [to the finance minister] in charge of the treasury.

Proposals for amending some articles have been studied and discussed before the forthcoming public sessions. The following report has more details:

[Unidentified correspondent] The Transitional National Council's financial and budget commission concentrated on discussing amendments to some articles in the 1996 draft budget following the public discussion at the level of the council's office, which endorsed them.

A new article in connection with an extra charge on imported and local products has been examined for modification. The members of the financial and budget commission have introduced three amendments to article 113 which determines the list of products, and distributing the products ratio on promoting exports, scientific research, and youth employment, and another amendment on old and new exemptions to the maximum of 80 per cent. This ratio is subject for reduction in the 1996 financial law through regulation.

It is worth pointing out that next year's financial law will witness a reduction to the price subsidies in comparison with this year pending their final lifting with the advent of 1997, the creation of more than 23,000 job opportunities, and increasing the proportion of investment by 22.76 to reach six per cent. The state will continue to support the public sector enterprises through the financial purging operation, but at a smaller rate than the current year.

Price for Vital Medicines To Be Reduced

LD0412140395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network
in Arabic 1200 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] It has been decided to reduce the prices of vital medicines for the treatment of terminal diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, and heart diseases by 40 percent as from the middle of this month. This measure has become possible by the fact that these are among the products classified in the list of products subject to limited profit margin.

This measure also allows for completing the measures for the benefit of the public health sector, particularly in connection with reducing the number of patients referred to French hospitals, which the Algerian social security fund shoulders.

Two Magistrates Murdered in New Political Violence

LD0412133595 Paris Radio France International
in French 1230 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been fresh political violence in Algeria. Two magistrates have been murdered.

A total of six people were murdered over the weekend, including a journalist working in the Algerian press.

Security Services Eliminate 29 'Terrorists'

LD0412204195 Algiers ENTV Television Network
in Arabic 1900 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement issued by the security services today says that 29 terrorists, including 10 in Tlemcen, have been eliminated by the security forces in a search operation last week.

In Tlemcen, according to information given by a repentant, security forces last Tuesday eliminated 10 terrorists and seized a considerable amount of weapons. The other 19 terrorists have been eliminated by the security forces in Algiers, Mostaganem, Chlef, Guelma, Khenchela, Blida, Oum El Bouaghi, Bouira, Medea and Constantine.

During these operations the security forces have seized 4 automatic pistols, 1 machine gun, 9 hunting rifles, 20 bombs, 8 hand grenades, and equipment to make hand grenades.

Egypt

Runoff Elections Seen as Important, Decisive

NC0512091495 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio
Network in Arabic 0435 GMT 5 Dec 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, AL-AHRAM discusses the second round of the People's Assembly elections. It says: Tomorrow's run-off elections are decisive because they will determine the final form of the People's Assembly for the next five years. The first round decided only 137 out of a total of 444 contested seats.

The paper hopes that the candidates, in their preparations for the second round, have corrected the mistakes and shortcomings that characterized their election campaigns, and that this will increase voter turnout. But more importantly, the paper adds, is that the elections produce a balanced Assembly representing all forces, trends, and parties in the country, each according to its weight.

Parties on Determination To Enter Runoff Elections

NC0412132295 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1215 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Dec (MENA) — 'Adil Husayn, secretary general of the Labor Party, has stated that the party is going ahead with runoff elections and that he finds no reason to boycott the runoff. He pointed out that it is in line with party policy to go on with the elections.

The party's secretary general told MENA that the elections reflected unprecedented public awareness.

He added that the party's participation in the first round aimed to raise people's political awareness and increase the turnout. We must go on in the second round, no matter what, he said.

Liberal Party leader Mustafa Kamil Murad said the party discussed withdrawal from the runoff elections with the other opposition parties. He added that consultations are going on in this connection.

Mustafa Bakri, deputy leader of the Liberal Party and the party's candidate in Mayu and al-Tibbin, highlighted the need for the opposition to stay in the runoff until the end. He pointed out that a boycott, regardless of the circumstances surrounding it, means withdrawal from the arena, something we should not be dragged into, as he put it.

Bakri stressed his determination to enter the battle but said that if his party decides upon a boycott, then he will be bound by it.

Four Go on Hunger Strike To Protest Voting Fraud

NC0412153995 Paris AFP in English
1522 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 4 (AFP) — Four people have been on hunger strike since last week's first round of Egypt's legislative elections in protest at alleged vote-rigging, police said Monday [4 December].

The four protesters who served as opposition observers at polling stations during Wednesday's vote have been taken to hospital in the southern province of Qina. They told police they began the strike "because of the fraud and rigging they witnessed in the polling stations."

Opposition parties have charged that the government rigged the first-round voting which gave the ruling party 123 seats and not a single seat to the opposition.

Former ruling National Democratic Party members running as independents won 14 seats. Run-offs are to be held Wednesday for 307 seats left undecided.

Police Arrest Muslim Brotherhood Campaign Workers

NC0412193995 Paris AFP in English
1728 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 4 (AFP) — Police on Monday [4 December] arrested 18 campaign workers for a Moslem Brotherhood candidate running in a second round of legislative elections, police officials said.

The followers of Mukhtar Nuh, the most senior Brotherhood member and candidate to survive the first round

vote held last Wednesday, were detained in dawn raids on their homes in Nuh's Cairo voting district of al-Matariyah, they said.

Nuh, the treasurer of the Brotherhood-led Lawyers Union, was one of only 27 Brotherhood candidates who managed to cling on to reach the run-offs, to be held on Wednesday.

The opposition has cried foul after its candidates failed to win a single seat in the first round, which saw the ruling National Democratic party (NDP) sweep up 123 of the 137 seats so far decided. The remaining 14 went to independents, most of them former NDP members.

A total 307 seats are up for grabs in the run-offs in which 66 opposition hopefuls, including the Brotherhood, are still left.

Nearly 2,000 Brotherhood followers were arrested in the days leading up to the first-round poll and during the voting itself. And the opposition also accused the government of widespread vote rigging.

Meanwhile, an interior ministry official said a total of 17 people died during violence connected to last Wednesday's vote. Security sources earlier said more than 80 were wounded during the poll and the next day.

Fourteen died in provinces in the northern Delta, two in south Egypt and one in Cairo, most in brawls between supporters of rival candidates, the official, who asked not to be named, said.

He said more violence was expected on Wednesday's run-offs due to "the high competition" adding that police numbers had been boosted.

Security Source: Brotherhood Cadres May Go 'Underground'

*NC0512102395 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic
1 Dec 95 p 23*

[Report by Sayyid Zaki]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A senior security source has told AL-MUSAWWAR that the state security services are watching every movement of the dissolved Muslim Brotherhood group following the closure of its headquarters. Any attempt to violate law and legitimacy will immediately be controlled, and those involved will be referred to the judiciary, the source said. The source added that the Muslim Brotherhood cadres and elements are now in a dormant stage [fatrat kumun], especially after a group of their symbols was condemned [by a military court]. But this, the source added, does not prevent some of them from trying to move under ground and form secret organizations to revive the ideas of the group and establish it within an entity after rearranging

their cards and reconsidering their calculations at this stage.

The source added: All Muslim Brotherhood attempts to find a legitimate cover and entity at the various sectors have been thwarted and rejected by the concerned authorities. [passage omitted]

Poll Shows 95% 'Indifferent' to Politics

NC0512092395

[FBIS Editorial Report] Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic in its 30 November issue publishes a 3,000-word report by Fathi 'Amir, page 4, in which he gives an account of the "latest opinion poll.... which AL-AHRAM weekly conducted under the supervision of Dr. Nadir Firjani, in cooperation with the al-Mishkah Research Center."

Selected "at random" from commuters at "two major train stations" in Cairo and al-Jizah governorates, the polled "sample" was classified into these categories: 37 percent received university education, 34 percent received intermediate education, 5 percent finished the preparatory stage, 6 percent finished the elementary stage, 6 percent were literate, and 11 percent were illiterate.

The poll posed questions to determine the mass medium that attracts and affects people the most. People were asked whether they watched television, listened to the radio, read government or opposition papers, read books, or went to the movies. A minority of 21 percent replied that they did none of that in the week that preceded the poll. "This result is a clear sign of the widespread social and political indifference," the report says.

A majority of 85 percent said they watched television, 41 percent said they listened to the radio, and 33 percent said they read the newspapers. This, according to Dr. Nadir Firjani, indicates that "the official media dominates the Egyptians's minds almost completely."

Some 28 percent of the polled sample said that they were subjected to one information medium during the week that preceded the poll, 30 percent were subjected to two media, 14 percent were subjected to three, and 7 percent were subjected to all the above-mentioned information media. The poll showed the supremacy of television as an information media; 70 percent of those subjected to one medium chose television, 18 percent chose the radio, only 2 percent chose the official newspapers, while less than 1 percent chose opposition papers.

Asked which information medium they viewed as the most important, 58 percent chose television, 23 percent

chose the radio, 14 percent chose the government press, and less than 5 percent chose opposition papers. Hence, over 95 percent chose official mass media as the most important source of information, the report concludes.

Asked about their view of normalization with Israel, 70 percent said they refuse to buy Israeli products, have Israeli factories built in Egypt, or visit Israel. Some 58 percent rejected Israelis visiting Egypt, 58 percent believe that the peace process has not granted the Palestinians their rights, and 10 percent refrained from expressing their views on the issue.

The poll posed questions about the political party that best expresses the people. A total of 46 percent had "absolutely nothing to say in the matter," and 26 percent said that "none of the existing political powers in Egypt expresses their views." This means that 72 of the Egyptian voters are resigned politically, the report says.

The poll showed that only 5 percent of the polled population are members in political parties. The major shock here is that 95 percent of the Egyptian people are reluctant to participate in the political game, the report says, attributing this to the regime's policies, which "consolidated indifference, frustration, and despair."

The poll showed also that only 22 percent had voting cards and that 53 percent had no intention to vote in the parliamentary elections.

Asked about the usefulness of the multiparty system, 33 percent replied that the matter did not interest them, 53 percent said the principle is feasible, while 34 percent said that the present form of the multiparty system was useful.

Asked about Islamic groups, 86 percent replied that "the Islamic groups that resort to violence work against public interest in Egypt," while 5 percent said the opposite. A total of 73 percent said that the groups that "do not resort to violence" are working for the people's interest.

The poll showed that 5.8 percent of the Egyptian voters belong to political parties. Of these, 4 percent are members of the ruling National Democratic Party. "The opposition parties' share of members is thus less than 1 percent for each party," the study concludes.

Arrest of Embassy Bombers Said Delayed Due to 'Leak'

NC0412181595 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic
28 Nov 95 p 18

[FBIS Translated Text] High-level Pakistani sources in Islamabad have told AL-AHRAM that Egypt strongly

protested to the Pakistani authorities concerned with following up the incident [embassy bombing] and threatened to suspend cooperation with them following the "leak" of important information that the Egyptian security team had gathered. The Egyptian team submitted the information to the Pakistani security team during their coordination meetings.

The information has been leaked to a certain component and part of it to a journalist. This has delayed the arrest of the perpetrators and led to a change of security plans. Egypt has demanded immediate and urgent investigations with every member of the Pakistani security team to determine who was responsible for the leak.

It has been learned that none of the Pakistani Police personnel is under suspicion, particularly considering that Pakistani Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar is one of the most fervent supporters of cooperation with Egypt. The Pakistani president, the prime minister, and the defense minister are as eager about cooperating.

Egypt has demanded an investigation with all members of the Pakistani investigating team, which represents various components including the police department, the intelligence, and the Pakistani Federal Bureau of Investigation. Suspicions about the leak center on some junior employees. Full and thorough coordination is under way between the Egyptian and Pakistani sides, a promising indication that the person responsible for the leak will soon be identified.

AL-AHRAM has learned that some components are opposed to Babar and demand his resignation, but he enjoys the full support of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, which specifically instructed him to shed light on the criminal incident and hand over the perpetrators to Egypt soon.

AL-AHRAM has also learned that Egypt's ambassador to Pakistan Nu'man Jalal has threatened to personally take the matter to the Pakistani prime minister if the person responsible for leaking this important information is not identified, particularly after the ambassador had received word from a certain component that demonstrations could be held outside the embassy because of the serious information leaked to a newspaper.

Papers View Visits by Peres, Ross, Peace Process

NC0512084595 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0620 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Dec (MENA) — Cairo newspapers say today that in the next two days, Cairo will be the scene of intensive efforts to advance the Middle East peace process. They note

that President Mubarak will hold important talks with Israeli Prime Minister Peres when the latter arrives in Cairo on Thursday on his first visit since assuming the premiership. The papers also refer to talks which U.S. Peace Coordinator Dennis Ross will hold when he arrives in Cairo in the next two days as part of his new tour of the Middle East.

AL-JUMHURIYAH and AL-AHRAM devote their editorial to discussing this subject. AL-JUMHURIYAH says the world will record with appreciation the efforts made by Mubarak's Egypt to protect the peace process and its intervention to remove the obstacles and mines from its way. It says Peres' talks in Cairo Thursday will provide the necessary contribution to Ross's efforts to achieve the hoped-for declaration of principles [between Israel and Syria].

The paper says the world is looking forward to Ross's current mission. It adds: Observers ask whether he will be able to achieve a declaration of principles between the two countries (Syria and Israel), one that clarifies the basis on which the desired peace agreement will be built, whether before or after the Israeli and American elections.

The paper describes the battle for peace as a kind of war and fighting, but in closed rooms. It stresses that what has been achieved so far on the other Arab-Israeli fronts cannot alone safeguard this fragile process.

AL-AHRAM calls on Israel to work harder to prepare the Israeli public to accept the idea of withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. It says this is extremely necessary because the Israeli government has not made any serious steps in this regard.

If Israel is really serious in its attempts to make peace, the paper says, then it should start earnest work to dismantle the elements that generate violence against domestic policy. It adds: The Israeli Government needs to adopt a new approach in its internal and external political movement. Foremost of all, it should end its policy of reluctance and leniency toward the extreme right wing groups and confront them decisively.

The paper notes that Israel's extremist right wing groups reject the current settlement process and the possibility of its resulting in relinquishing a single inch of what those groups consider "the land of the ancestors." Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination was an attempt by a not insignificant sector of the Israeli right-wing religious trend to stop the settlement process, the paper says.

Despite the big moral momentum given to the Israeli peace camp in the wake of the assassination, AL-AHRAM concludes, religious extremism has returned once again, and just as vigorously as before.

Reports on Israeli Nuclear Tests in Red Sea Viewed NC0412160695 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 28 Nov 95 p 10

[Article by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "Nuclear Tests in al-'Aqaba?"; from the "Closeup" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] Is Israel really conducting nuclear tests in the Gulf of Aqaba? This question was raised a few days ago following the earthquake when reports from Tripoli cited Colonel Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi as saying that responsibility for the tremors that swept the region falls on the Israelis, who are conducting their nuclear tests in the Red Sea at the Gulf of Aqaba! Many people did not believe the Libyan story. The Egyptian papers published this statement for amusement purposes without even bothering to verify it.

The actual and amazing surprise, which perhaps proved that the Libyan interpretation of the earthquake was not far from the truth, had come in a brief and casual remark by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa on the eve of his departure for Barcelona the day before yesterday. Musa declared that Egypt is following up reports that Israel is conducting nuclear tests in the Gulf of Aqaba. Musa's remark came in the context of a comprehensive statement on Middle East peace and the need to raise the question of clearing the region of weapons of mass destruction.

Unfortunately, this brief remark passed unnoticed, as if the journalists present at the news conference had neither heard it nor grasped its significance, for they did not ask him to elaborate or explain it further. If it were true that Israel has conducted, is indeed conducting, or is suspected of conducting nuclear tests in the Red Sea, it would be too serious a matter to be mentioned "casually" and in brief. If that were the case, the talk about an Israeli earthquake hitting the peace process would be more important than the real earthquake that hit some Middle Eastern countries and, naturally, more important than the Barcelona conference and what happened before it or what will happen during and after it.

This incident or talk raises deep suspicions about the extent to which we give attention to Egyptian security in the Red Sea. For it would be unreasonable for Israel to have conducted nuclear tests under the sea, on the ground, or in the sky in the Negev Desert, in the Gulf of Aqaba, or anywhere else without our eyes, monitoring equipment, and control and reconnaissance devices picking them up and without the U.S. and Russian satellites as well as the international forecasting

stations, which record every single move in the Middle East, noticing them.

The entire world became furious with France for conducting nuclear tests in the Pacific thousands of miles away from inhabited areas. So what if it is true that Israel had conducted nuclear tests only a few kilometers away from populated cities, particularly since Israel is not subjected to any control and is not committed to any international agreement banning nuclear tests? This is an issue that one cannot be silent about, whether by denial or confirmation!

Libya

Iran Embassy Denies Link With al-Qadhdhafi's Son
LD0512101795 Tripoli JANA in Arabic
0920 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 5 Dec (JANA) — The Iranian embassy in the Great Jamahiriya issued a statement refuting a report published in the London *SUNDAY TELEGRAPH* on Iran and the Great Jamahiriya.

The statement said that the president of the [Islamic] Republic of Iran does not have an adviser named "Abbaspur" who works as the manager of the "Bandaran" company, that the presidency does not basically know of the existence of a company by this name which is said to trade in oil, and that Sayf al-Islam [al-Qadhdhafi's son] does not have any commercial links with Iran. Therefore, the statement says, what the newspaper alleged is sheer lies.

Sudan

Al-Bashir Addresses Defense, Security Conference
EA0412201095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 Nov 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The president of the Republic, Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, has affirmed the importance of the defense and security sector in the life of the citizens, society, and state security. He said without the achievement of security and stability, a healthy society can never exist. He made the comments in an address this morning at the opening session of the defense and security sector conference held at the Friendship Hall in Khartoum.

He added that this sector is performing an important and leading role in the administration of public life in Sudan. He stressed the need to have an outstanding role in developing this sector to enable its units to accomplish their prescribed role. He said the collapse of security actually means the collapse of all state institutions. His Excellency, the president expressed hope that the

conference will come up with recommendations that will work for the development of Sudan. He hailed the fighters garrisoned at the outlets, the martyrs, and the wounded, and wished our gallant forces quick victory.

The conference later continued its deliberations, and reviewed three working papers on the role of the indigenization sector in the national duty, its future prospects, expanding security, and its social impact on development. The conference is expected to complete its business this afternoon, and to issue its resolutions and recommendations. [passage omitted]

Al-Bashir Accuses Uganda of Interference

MM0512084395 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
4 Dec 95 pp 1, 6

[Interview with President Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir by Nizar Daw-al-Na'im; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Daw-al-Na'im] You recently mentioned that there has been an improvement in Sudan's foreign relations. To what extent have they improved?

[Al-Bashir] Although we have to admit that the improvement in Sudan's relations is slower than we would have hoped, it is still advancing rapidly. This is because some arrogant states which are hostile toward Sudan are waving their stick at anyone wanting to get close to or negotiate with Sudan. They have made it their official policy to blockade Sudan economically and isolate it politically, however, despite all that, since the Gulf crisis we have achieved varying degrees of success in improving our relations with some Arab states.

Sudan's relations with many neighboring and more distant African states have had a boost, and we have concluded bilateral agreements with some African states and others in East Europe. There has been a thaw in our relations with West European states, with which we have had exchanges and started a dialogue. We have overcome the paralysis in our relations with some EU states by either restoring relations or reactivating them. Our relations with the Asian group have had a rapid growth, making them a model of what we would like our relations with the world's states to be, in the context of political coordination and understanding, and active economic cooperation. Also, our diplomatic staff have been markedly active in international meetings and congresses, restoring confidence in their positive role and winning back Sudan's membership of nine UN committees, organizations, and agencies.

[Daw-al-Na'im] How is the situation in the South now, and have you achieved any definite military gains?

[Al-Bashir] Any observer would now notice that the alliance being forged against Sudan, woven by arrogant states with the alleged aim of containing Sudan, is in fact intended, as we know and everybody knows, to topple its government and its Islamic tendency. The Sudanese Army and the people's forces were only one step away from liberating the whole of Sudan from the treacherous rebels who want to rip apart Sudan's existence and identity when the Ugandan attack came, with Eritrea participating with tanks and heavy weapons and technical cadres which Egypt's air force helped to transport. Its was a comprehensive campaign against Sudan, but our armed forces were able to contain this attack and force it to stop and retreat, kilometer by kilometer. The military provocation in Hala'ib, intended to divert Sudan from focusing on repelling the Ugandan attack, was part of a concerted effort that the instigators were unable to conceal. There was a publicized rather than secret exchange of visits by the three countries' defense ministers and presidents. We do not need anyone to tell us that there is a conspiracy against Sudan, since the conspirators themselves do not think that they need to hide it.

[Daw-al-Na'im] What evidence does Sudan have of Uganda's involvement in the clashes? Are there any prisoners?

[Al-Bashir] Forget about Sudan's evidence which consists of photos, documents, recordings of conversations, and corpses and, if you want, just refer to the international and independent news agencies' unequivocal reports about Uganda's intervention in Sudan with troops, communication equipment, and aircraft. Some of these agencies have even given details of the equipment, where it was delivered, and what guarantees were given that it would not be used in Rwanda. Despite its naive denial, Uganda cannot hide having moved scores of its tanks and heavy artillery pieces and flown its helicopters inside another state's borders. The Ugandan leadership had previously stated its determination to intervene in Sudan and even set November as the time to do it, on the pretext of pursuing the Ugandan opposition. The Ugandan government publicly asked its parliament to sanction it. Why, Brother, do we ask for evidence of an action that the perpetrators have not attempted to hide? They are working openly because they know that the so-called international legitimacy loses its grip if the victim is an Islamic state, and especially if it is considered to be a hostile fundamentalist state by the influential people in the organizations responsible for so-called international legitimacy.

[Daw-al-Na'im] Why did the government not make any specific announcements concerning the capture

of specific positions despite its numerous statements announcing victories?

[Al-Bashir] I do not know where you found these numerous statements. The government issued only two statements regarding the situation in the operations zone, and we are not talking about cities and villages. The operations zone is an uninhabited jungle area and when people talk about Magwe and Farajok; they talk about military positions and not cities or villages. The first military success was to contain the treacherous attack and then repel it and force it to retreat, thwarting its plans to capture any known city and revive the rebellion, still reeling from the painful blows delivered by the Armed Forces and the bullets of the warring factions.

[Daw-al-Na'im] What are your views on the accord, which, as we have noticed, is widely accepted by public opinion?

[Al-Bashir] Thank God for your good powers of observation. We have noticed that the Sudanese people have rushed to enlist for the jihad in their hundreds and thousands, we have noticed the housewives' eagerness to prepare the mujahid's supplies, and we have noticed the martyrs' weddings which have given a new meaning to celebrations, whereby death is celebrated as in a marriage, with families celebrating and rejoicing. The accord that we are talking about, Brother, is a pompous word. If what is meant by it is a commitment to dialogue and negotiation and the choice of the path of virtue to reach solutions for contested issues, then this has been our way since the start of the revolution, which has shown no hostility to anyone. We initiated the dialogue with the parties' leaderships in the first days when they were detained and told them all: Come, let us agree on how to fulfill the Sudanese people's aspirations for Islamic justice and liberate their land from the squalor of rebellion and proclaim its sovereignty over subservience to anyone, be they close or distant. Our relations with everyone must be based on equality, reciprocity, and neighborly respect. We told the parties' leaders: Our country has had enough division and infighting, sown by parties and factions which cannot see eye to eye and which have no time for each other. But they refused, and instead continued to fight over the Sudanese people's allegiance, which they took for granted, thinking that nobody should hold them accountable or challenge their right. Some of them went very far and called on Sudan's enemies to invade Sudan, in the hope that they would perhaps make them rulers, oblivious of the fact that the most hated ruler is the one imposed by invading armies. Now we are on the threshold of a new phase, whereby the people can choose, in free and open elections, among those who want to participate and those who want to be spectators in this phase. We urge all

those who claim to care about the homeland and who claim to be a force to be reckoned with in the political arena to come forward, so that the voters can issue their verdict.

[Daw-al-Na'im] Since the beginning, the government has called for dialogue and participation. Oppositionists, however, stress that those who have joined the government are very few and that there has been no major change in the parties' cadres. What is your view?

[Al-Bashir] This is beyond doubt. You can review the lists of parties' candidates in the 1986 elections, and then review the lists of candidates and winners in the allegiance [majalis wila'iyah], provincial, and national councils. I shall wait for you to prepare this study in order to publish it in full.

[Daw-al-Na'im] We have noticed a sharp rise in prices and an increase in the economic burden on the citizens, and also the social security departments' failure to play a prominent part in helping the low-income groups.

[Al-Bashir] We have also noticed it and know the reasons for it. We have also noticed the people's resilience and know the reasons for it, but we are still making efforts to contain the effects of open economic policies at a time that we know is not right for a free economy policy, because the country is fighting a costly war of attrition, and those who are waging war on Sudan demand that Sudan accepts the South's secession and the removal of the Shari'a. This is an impossible price to pay to end the war. Also, because of its independent

positions, the country is being subjected to a blockade and is even being deprived of its legitimate rights with regard to the international economic institutions. However, we know that to be stoical about the effects of free economy is better than to try a policy of government economic despotism which would violate Islamic principles and would obviously fail to solve the economic problems. Economic freedom, despite its effects on the low-income groups in the cities, has had noticeable effects on the producers in the countryside and on the economic growth overall, resulting in a growth rate jump from a negative value to 8 percent in the salvation years, according to the international institutions' estimates, and to a 10-percent growth rate according to the Sudanese Government's estimates. I remind you that the [International Monetary] Fund [IMF] has praised an African country for achieving a 5-percent growth rate, but the IMF seems to lose its voice when it comes to matters concerning Sudan.

[Daw-al-Na'im] You have accused states near and far of hatching a plot against Sudan, based on rebellion and the northern opposition. What is this plan, and who is behind it?

[Al-Bashir] I leave it up to the readers' intelligence to work out the nature of this plan, as I would not want to insult their intelligence. As to who is behind this plan, I would again leave this matter up to the readers' memory, as I would not want to insult it.

GCC Supreme Council Members Meet in Oman**Saudi Crown Prince Speaks**

LD0412143995 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1350 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Muscat, 4 Dec — His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, gave the following statement to the Omani News Agency upon his highness's arrival in the Sultanate of Oman to head the kingdom's delegation to the meetings of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] 16th session on Monday, 4 December 1995:

['Abdallah] On the occasion of holding the 16th session of the GCC supreme council, it makes me happy to address the deepest thanks and appreciation for my brother His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, sultan of Oman, and the government and people of the Sultanate of Oman, for hosting this session which is being held in very sensitive circumstances through which our Arab region has been going in the light of the political changes which have recently taken place in them with the aim of weakening the status of these countries at the regional, Arab, and Islamic levels. [passage omitted]

In the name of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, I hope that our meeting will produce positive results for the benefit of our countries and peoples. [passage omitted]

It is common knowledge that the establishment of the GCC represents the practical response to an essential demand and a regional necessity dictated by current circumstances. It has become clear to the Arabian Gulf states that they were facing a joint security issue because they have become targets of some of their enemies who are lying in wait. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, is of the view that the only way to confront these challenges is by gathering together the human, economic, political, and military resources of these states. [passage omitted]

Oman's Qabus Addresses Supreme Council

JN0412174695 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television
Network in Arabic 1618 GMT 4 Dec 95

[Speech by Sultan Qabus of Oman at the opening session of the 16th summit of the Supreme Council of the GCC at the Bustan Palace Hotel in Muscat—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Praise be to God, and prayers and peace be upon God's messenger, his family, his companions, and his supporters. My brothers Your

Highnesses, leaders of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council], and Your Highnesses, Your Excellencies, and the members of the delegations: On this glorious day of the blessed annual meeting of the GCC leaders, we are pleased to welcome you all in the land of Oman, and we hope that God will grant us success during this 16th Gulf summit, which brings us together—leaders and peoples—on the path of hope and work for the sake of a happier future for us all to add, with God's help, to what we have achieved some of what we have to achieve at this stage and to bring about good, prosperity, security, and stability for our peoples and our region.

Your kinsfolk here find in this historic meeting an opportunity to express to you their pure amity and brotherhood; their feelings of appreciation and support; and the true desire of the peoples of our countries for stronger brotherhood, rapprochement, solidarity, and cooperation in order to attain the noble objectives for which this council was established.

On this occasion, we are also pleased to commend the great effort His Highness brother Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah and the officials of the brotherly State of Bahrain exerted to run the works of the previous session of the Supreme Council and to effectively carry out the duties of the GCC during the past period.

My brother Highnesses: The GCC member states' continued effort to keep our region from tensions and conflicts, which are being witnessed in the international arena, and from the harmful repercussions of such tensions and conflicts that may spread to many areas should be praised and appreciated.

Facts have proven that adopting a moderate policy in the field of international relations and dealing with others with complete credibility are viewed as a sound behavior and a wise policy that will yield good fruits represented in entrenching the rules of security, stability, and prosperity.

It has also been proven that comprehensive cooperation among the countries of the region in the defense, security, economic, social, and cultural areas, in congruence with the circumstances of each country, is not only a heartfelt desire, but is also a necessity and an unescapable duty. Without this cooperation, the aspired goals we all seek to realize can never be achieved. We should work seriously and untiringly to overcome the obstacles that may preclude or delay the attainment of these objectives.

This cooperation among us is considered a cornerstone for the future of the region. The modern orientations of the world stipulate greater and broader cooperation than ever among the international groupings which adopt

identical policies and share similar economic, social, and cultural characteristics.

The GCC member states have comprehended this principle right from the beginning. Thus they started coordinating their positions regarding it. Consequently, they held various meetings with the world economic groupings, starting with the EU, to boost trade, encourage investments, and develop technical and scientific capabilities and skills to serve the joint interests and maximize the mutual benefits.

My brothers, Your Highnesses, this session of your esteemed council convenes amid various developments on the world scene, foremost of which are the positive steps that were taken in the Middle East peace process. It is no secret that the GCC member states have dealt with these developments with a realistic approach that had positively supported the efforts being exerted in that domain. We hope the peace endeavors will continue and gain strength on all tracks. We emphasize that the peace we seek and in which we believe will provide stability, prosperity, and security for the region and all its peoples is the just and comprehensive peace. Such peace would eradicate the factors of violence and eliminate the causes of extremism. It should entrench the values of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and civilized interaction among the peoples.

From this podium, we call on all countries to seek the achievement of this objective and to use all means possible to overcome the difficulties and obstacles that may impede their course.

We welcome you once again and wish you a good stay in this country of yours. We implore God to grant us success in this session, in no small part due to your sincere efforts and rightful counsel. We implore God to guide our steps toward serving the interest of our Gulf family, which we hope will enjoy continued glory, prosperity, and progress in the various fields.

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to the Ministerial Council, the permanent ministerial committees, his highness the secretary general and his aides, and the General Secretariat's employees for their good efforts and commendable contribution in terms of preparation for this session.

We ask God the Almighty to show us the right path so that we will follow it and to show us the evil path so that we will avoid it. God is all hearing. May God's peace and blessings be upon you. [applause]

GCC Leaders To Hold 2 Working Sessions

JN0512065295 Muscat Radio Oman Network
in Arabic 0600 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Their majesties and highnesses the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries will resume their 16th GCC summit at the Bustan Palace Hotel today under the chairmanship of His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id. The GCC leaders will hold one morning working session and another evening session to discuss the topics on the summit agenda.

Kuwaiti Amir Receives Qatari Counterpart

LD0412210595 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
2031 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Muscat, 4 Dec (KUNA) — His Highness Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah received at his residence in al-Bustan Palace this evening Qatari Amir His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani. During the meeting the two discussed the agenda of the 16th GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] summit, as well as bilateral relations.

The meeting was attended by the members of the two countries' delegations.

His highness also received at his residence Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah. During the meeting the two amirs discussed the situation in the region and relations between the States of Kuwait and Bahrain.

Foreign Ministers Meet With Drafting Committee

JN0512080295 Muscat Radio Oman Network
in Arabic 0700 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries held a meeting at the Bustan Palace Hotel this morning on the sidelines of the GCC Supreme Council meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to coordinate on a number of issues which concern the political, economic, and social march of the GCC.

Diplomatic sources at the summit said that the drafting committee held a meeting also to draft the final communique which will be issued at the end of the 16th GCC summit.

Other Sideline Meetings Reported

JN0512114895

[FBIS Editorial Report] Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic at 0900 GMT on 5 December reports on meetings held on 5 December between the Gulf Cooperation

Council [GCC] leaders on the sidelines of their 16th summit.

The radio reports Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman this morning visited Emirian President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, Qatari Amir Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud at their residences in the Bustan Palace Hotel. The radio notes that their talks dealt with topics on the 16th GCC summit agenda, in addition to bilateral relations and ways to strengthen them to serve the Gulf people's interests.

In another report, the radio says Sultan Qabus received at his residence in the Bustan Palace Hotel GCC Secretary General Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi. The radio says that Sultan Qabus commended the role played by the GCC General Secretariat to prepare for the 16th GCC summit being held in Oman.

The radio also reports that Emirian President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan received Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah; Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah received Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah and Emirian President Shaykh Zayid; and Qatari Amir Shaykh Hamad received Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir and Emirian President Shaykh Zayid. The GCC leaders exchanged views on the topics on the 16th GCC summit and reviewed bilateral relations.

Muscat radio also reports, within its 0900 GMT newscast, that the Kuwaiti, Bahraini, and Qatari leaders held talks with GCC Secretary General Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi to discuss the GCC march and issues of interest to all Gulf people, in addition to the topics on the 16th GCC summit.

Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince 'Abdallah Likely To Be Fahd's Successor

MS0512094895 London THE GUARDIAN in English
5 Dec 95 p 10

[Report by Leslie Plommer: "Fears Mount For Ailing King Fahd"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The deteriorating health of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia was underlined yesterday when Crown Prince 'Abdallah flew into Oman to attend a Gulf Co-operation Council meeting in his place.

That and Riyadh's cancellation of his planned meeting with King Husayn of Jordan are the first unambiguous signs that King Fahd's medical problems may soon be too serious and numerous for him to overcome. His

cardiovascular system is weak after a life of chain-smoking and over-eating, and diabetes, arthritis and gall-bladder trouble are also taking their toll.

Washington confirmed yesterday that the king had suffered a stroke, and an American medical team had flown to the kingdom to assist in his treatment. But an official denied reports that he may have been partially paralysed and said Washington believed he was "doing well".

In a country where the royal family is the state, the succession now looms for the first time since King Khaled's heart attack in 1982 put Fahd on the throne.

The transition is an opaque and internal family matter which, despite King Fahd's efforts to codify it in 1992, still relies on consensus the crown prince canvassing the various factions to invite their allegiance.

There is little doubt, however, who the heir will be. For at least two years Crown Prince 'Abdallah, the first deputy prime minister and chief of the National Guard has been increasingly standing in for the king at his twice-weekly public audiences. He is a half-brother of King Fahd, and like him in his early seventies, but in more robust health.

Another stand-in has been Prince Sultan, the second deputy prime minister and defence minister, who is about three years younger. He is a full brother of the king.

Those who have met him describe Crown Prince 'Abdallah as "a lesser intellect than King Fahd" but more direct and inclined to see issues in black and white.

He lacks experience in foreign affairs and has been hampered domestically by the king's insistence on acting as his own first minister. He also suffers from a stutter, but this has made him a good listener.

"'Abdallah is a good traditional ruler," said one Western diplomat. "He's not overly corrupt and he's generous in his disbursements."

The next king will inherit a welter of problems, most stemming from the fact that society is changing faster than the traditional system of ruling it and the suffocating statist economy — change evident in the rising demand, for power from educated tech-nocratic secularists on the one hand, and political Islamists on the other.

It is uncertain that Crown Prince 'Abdallah supports the hesitant political reforms King Fahd has attempted to keep the educated elite or board. Nor is he sympathetic to political Islam, especially when it engages in protests against the ruling house and its American backers.

Faced with mosque demonstrations, or an event like the recent car bombing of a building housing US trainers in Riyadh, "Abdallah's reflex will be to break heads," said one expert.

In general, pro-Western policies are expected to remain in place although with a tougher line towards Israel and the peace process. But Crown Prince 'Abdallah will be a less easy target than Fahd for those in Saudi Arabia who take their cue from Iran's theocracy. Ordinary Saudis see him as a genuinely devout Muslim without playboy predilections.

The most difficult nut to crack will be the economy. With oil prices moderate and Saudi Arabia pumping about 8 million barrels a day, the coffers are far from bare. But the days of lavish pay for no work cannot be sustained.

It is doubtful whether Crown Prince 'Abdallah will do more than continue King Fahd's cautious tinkering with subsidies and welfare but there is hope that he has the moral authority to get ruling-family members to tighten their belts in the face of public revulsion at their privileges and greed.

Cabinet Hears Report on King Fahd, Discusses GCC

LD0412174895 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1615 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 4 Dec (SPA) — The Council of Ministers has expressed its profound happiness and satisfaction with the good positive results of the comprehensive medical tests carried out on King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, may God watch over him, at the King Faysal specialit hospital and the research center in Riyadh from 30 November. [passage omitted]

Following the session, Information Minister Dr. Fu'ad Bin-'Abd-al-Salam al-Farisi said in a statement to SPA that Prince Sultan expressed, on behalf of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the hopes of Saudi Arabia, its Government, and its people, for the 16th GCC summit, to be held today in the Omani capital Muscat, to further strengthen the close ties and the joint action in all spheres. [passage omitted]

His highness the second deputy prime minister praised the political orientation of the GCC member states, and explained that this is represented by safeguarding the security of the Arab Gulf region, which is their responsibility. [passage omitted]

On the political level, His Royal Highness Prince Sultan called on the parties concerned in Afghanistan to show concern for the need to resort to reason, logic, and

constructive dialogue in order to reach a solution which would end the conflict, which has lasted too long and which must be ended.

His highness the second deputy prime minister said: "Under the leadership of the custodian of the two holy mosques, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia considers that it is important to put an end to the bloodshed and the waste of innocent lives, so that those who plan to fan the conflict will not benefit from an escalation of the situation in Afghanistan."

Dr Fu'ad Bin-'Abd-al-Salam al Farisi pointed out that after discussing a number of issues included in the agenda, the Council issued the following resolutions:

First: After taking cognisance of the case put forward by the prime minister's office, containing a cable from his highness the foreign minister; and after taking cognisance of the recommendation of the General Committee of the Council of Ministers, the Council has decided the following:

Approval of the regulations on the GCC citizens' practising wholesale trading. [passage omitted]

Second: After taking cognisance of the case received from the office of the prime minister, which contains a cable sent by the foreign minister; and after taking cognisance of a recommendation by the General Purpose Committee of the Council of Ministers, the Council has decided: To permit citizens of the GCC member states to carry out economic practices in the spheres of contracting to supply, providing marketing services for others, weights and measures, and cleansing services. [passage omitted]

United Arab Emirates

Iran's Velayati on Readiness To Continue Talks

LD0312100395 Tehran IRNA in English
0721 GMT 3 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Dec. 3, IRNA — [Iranian] Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati Saturday [2 December] voiced Iran's readiness to continue talks with the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In an interview with the AL-WATAN newspaper published in Doha, Velayati praised Qatar's efforts to arrange talks between Tehran and Abu Dhabi saying these indicated Doha's goodwill and observance of good friendly ties. The foreign minister added that Qatar's efforts in this connection can set the example for the establishment of friendly ties among neighboring countries. Iran and the United Arab Emirates held talks in Doha on November 18-21.

The foreign minister stressed that relations among the states in the sensitive Persian Gulf region should be amicable or at least normalized. Stressing that there is no problem between Iran on one hand and Saudi Arabia and Bahrain on the other, he said relations between Iran and these countries can expand.

Asked about the recent explosion in Riyadh, he underscored that the Islamic Republic of Iran does not agree with such procedures which provide further pretexts for aliens to interfere in the domestic affairs of regional countries. He reiterated Tehran was against any kind of foreign presence in the region.

Al Nuhayyan: Work Continues on Dispute With Iran

*LD0312233095 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
2113 GMT 3 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 3 Dec (KUNA) — UAE [United Arab Emirates] President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan stressed the importance of Arab reconciliation, but he emphasized that that will not be achieved before Iraq's implementation of the UN Security Council's resolutions on its aggression against Kuwait.

In an interview to the Kuwaiti AL SIYASSAH, which will be published tomorrow, he said: "We want the reconciliation to be achieved after Iraq implements the UN Security Council's resolutions. Iraq has to implement what it has to implement and take whatever is due to it."

In the interview that he held with Chief Editor Ahmad al- Jarallah, he added: "There is no war without end and there must be reconciliation after the war." [passage omitted]

With regard to the three islands occupied by Iran, Shaykh Zayid said that the UAE was continuing its work to solve that question through dialogue. However, he added that if that dialogue and peaceful efforts failed, his country will submit the case to the International Court of Justice.

Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan reiterated his country's rejection of Iran's occupation of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa.

He said that the recent meeting that was held between the representatives of the two countries in Doha "failed because of Iran's sticking to not returning the right to those who are entitled to it."

He added that the Iranians wanted to negotiate so as they will take without giving "and that is impossible." He pointed out that Iran's refusal to have recourse to the International Court of Justice to solve this dispute proves that right is not on its side.

Shaykh Zayid praised the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member states' stance supporting the right of the UAE to recover those islands. He also said that the UAE was trying to solve the dispute through consultations, good offices, and mediation.

Saddam Reportedly Appeals For Reconciliation With GCC

*JN0512062095 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic
0500 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] According to an Arab diplomatic source, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has made an appeal to Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] leaders, urging a reconciliation among yesterday's enemies in the Gulf war.

Saddam Husayn urged his Gulf neighbors to open up a new chapter for the benefit of all parties.

The sources [as heard] which reported this did not mention how and through which channel Saddam Husayn made this appeal to the GCC leaders.

'Aziz Confers With Cuban Deputy Prime Minister

*JN0412204195 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1900 GMT 4 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 4 Dec (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today met with Pedro Miret Prieto, Cuban Council of State first vice president, Council of Ministers vice president, and head of the Cuban delegation to the Iraqi-Cuban joint committee. The delegation accompanying Miret also participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to activate the traditional friendly relations and cooperation between Iraq and Cuba to serve the national interests of the two friendly countries and peoples.

The two sides also reviewed the unjust blockade the United States imposes on the Iraqi and Cuban peoples and exposed the despicable U.S. policy, which maintains the unjust blockade on these two countries because of the independent national policies that distinguish them and their militant national leaderships.

Miret expressed the Cuban people's appreciation for the Iraqi leadership and people, who are confronting aggression and have succeeded in the reconstruction process.

'Aziz Confers With Former French Trade Minister

*JN0412143595 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1320 GMT 4 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 4 Dec (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today received Charles de Chemeran [name as transliterated], former French trade minister and deputy chairman of the Dar Wadi al-Rafidayn Society.

During the meeting, they stressed the need to resume cooperation between Iraq and France in the service of

the national interests of the two friendly countries and peoples.

Charles de Chemeran called for cooperation in cultural and agricultural areas as the main goal of the Dar Wadi al-Rafidayn Society.

He also called for lifting the blockade on Iraq, stressing the desire of the French people to continue friendly relations and cooperation with Iraq.

Paper Lauds UAE President's Call To Lift Embargo

*JN0512114095 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0905 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 5 Dec (INA)—The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH says the call made by United Arab Emirates [UAE] President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan to lift the unfair embargo imposed on the Iraqi people and ending their suffering is an impressive indication of the start of an Arab awareness, which is required at this significant stage.

In an article published here today under the headline "Dangers of the U.S. Policy and the Required Arab Awareness," the paper says: The UAE call — which constituted a roar — would not have emerged in such strong fashion without a sophisticated awareness of the dangers of the U.S. and Zionist policies and their continuous attempts to maintain the current state of fragmentation and deterioration and neutralize the world community's efforts to lift the embargo imposed on the Iraqi people. They are doing this in order to weaken and destroy the Arab nation, and then plunder its wealth by imposing total hegemony over it.

The paper adds: This awareness developed after everyone became aware of the following clear fact: that Iraq has fulfilled all its international obligations toward the UN Security Council resolutions and demonstrated full cooperation, in all objectivity and openness, with the Special Commission and its representative. This fact makes it incumbent on the UN Security Council to fulfill its obligations toward Iraq and lift the embargo imposed on it without delay and without fabricating excuses that seek to distort facts.

The paper says: The national and pan-Arab consciousness needed at this stage requires a quick scientific and objective review to diagnose the faults and hostile schemes, and set up the proper framework for a joint, unified Arab action and position to meet the current and future challenges on all economic, cultural, and social levels, especially since our Arab homeland is now seeing the emergence of new challenges, in addition to the well known traditional challenges.

APFC Chief Assails Ekeus' Tour of Gulf States

JN0412152195 Baghdad INA in English
1400 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Dec 4, INA— Arab Popular Forces Conference (APFC) Secretary General Sa'd Qasim Hammudi has lashed out at the recent statements made by the United Nations Special Committee Chief Rolf Ekeus describing them as biased, the BAGHDAD OBSERVER newspaper said.

Mr. Hammudi said prior and during his recent tour of the Arab Gulf region Mr. Ekeus made dramatic statements characterized by lack of impartiality [preceding word as received] and objectiveness emphasizing that the UNSCOM chief has justified his visit to the capitals of the Arab Gulf states, as for political and financial reasons.

Initially Mr. Ekeus is not personally required to look for financial resources to finance the expenses of his inspection teams that call on Iraq to destroy what is termed as mass destruction weapons. This job, he added, is the responsibility of the United Nations and the influential member-states who exercise guardianship and domination over the decision of the UN Security Council, Mr. Hammudi said.

He went on to say the mission of the UNSCOM chief is an executorial one as defined in Section (C) of UN Resolution 687 and it is not a political one. In other words the UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are both commissioned with the destruction of the weapons prescribed to Iraq by the Security Council following the ceasefire in February, 1991. The role of the UNSCOM is confined to the submission of reports to the Security Council to this respect after completion of its mission which would enable the council to consider the enforcement of Article 22 of the said Resolution (687).

The appointment of Ekeus to do this job has not been accidental. It has come out to cover up the conspiratorial role of the American imperialist policy toward Iraq before and after the 30-state aggression, he said.

Iraq, he maintained, has genuinely cooperated with UNSCOM since April 1991, for the implementation of Res-

olution 687 with all essential legal and technical interpretations. Therefore, Iraq rejects any prejudicious dimensions to the resolution, a system which Washington tried and is still trying hard to apply. This legal perspective of the situation is not Iraq's own view but also shared by each of Russia, France and China as permanent big powers in the UN Security Council as well as the non-aligned countries.

Following the defection of Husayn Kamil Hasan, the former minister of industry, Iraq was quick to call Ekeus to provide him with important data and documents that were concealed by the former official. With these facts in hand Iraq has reaffirmed its good intentions and preparedness to finish the job of the UNSCOM as early as possible to speed up lifting the embargo and putting an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people, Mr. Hammudi elaborated.

The tour of Ekeus of the Arab Gulf capitals and his suspicious statements has been characterized by blackmail not only for reason pertaining to his effort to collect funds for his commission, as he claims, but also to contain the public sympathy Iraq has gained in the Arab Gulf region and to nip in the bud the initiative of Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan, president of the United Arab Emirates which calls for Arab reconciliation and lifting the oppressive embargo.

This sincere call has been met by very negative reaction by the US and Britain and their agents who portrayed Iraq as an imminent threat to the region's security and stability. The other aim is to perpetrate the foreign military presence and extort more petrodollars from the coffers of the states, involved, the AFPC chief said.

The statements are mainly serving the pressure campaign which certain countries are exercising on Iraq to accept the ill-fated UN Resolution 986, with Ekeus stating earlier that lifting of the embargo is not expected in the foreseeable future.

Concluding, Mr. Hammudi said the removal of sanctions from former Yugoslavia according to the Dayton accord has set a precedent that a similar treatment is possible vis-a-vis Iraq which has made tangible progress on the way of implementing the relevant UN resolutions.

Peres Confirms Interest in U.S. Defense Pact

TA0512095795 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1
Network in Hebrew 1950 GMT 4 Dec 95

[Interview with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Dan Margalit on a special program marking the 30th day since the assassination of the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem on 4 December — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Margalit] Israel is now conducting its policy on the basis of your concept of the negotiations with Syria, according to which there is no need to focus exclusively on the officers talks.

[Peres] I do not think that Yitzhaq Rabin wanted to focus only on the officers talks.

[Margalit] He did as the first stage.

[Peres] No. He thought that was the level at which the talks should begin. The negotiations hit a dead end, however, and Yitzhaq was highly sensitive — and we should retain this sensitivity — to the threat of a conflict with the United States. These negotiations constitute a triangle. There are the talks between us and Syria, as well as negotiations with regard to the U.S. role in the negotiations. Seeing as the United States is Israel's most devoted ally — and I think that President Clinton is a true friend both of Israel and of the late Yitzhaq Rabin — I think that we should definitely behave as friends should.

[Margalit] Apparently, Yitzhaq Rabin told President Clinton that he was prepared to withdraw to the international border on the Golan Heights. Is that also your position?

[Peres] Do you want me to start speculating now? I will apprise President Clinton of my position. [passage omitted]

[Margalit] Mr. Peres, this interview swings between the present and the past. I would like to take you back to the more distant past, back to David Ben-Gurion, whom you often quote. I am talking about a defense pact with the United States. Will we now witness the greatest superpower on earth expressing its readiness to sign a defense pact with the Jewish state? Will you support this?

[Peres] It depends on what kind of pact. I am not rejecting this out of hand. I did not rule it out during Ben-Gurion's time, and as you know, neither did he. It depends on the nature, conditions, and timing of the agreement. We must first see whether the United States is prepared to enter such an agreement. It is not my custom to solicit negative replies.

[Margalit] Would the kind of freedom of operation Turkey enjoys within the framework of NATO be an example?

[Peres] These are interesting examples, but we must first examine the matter.

[Margalit] Would similar assurances suffice for Israel?

[Peres] I repeat that the matter is worth exploring. It could definitely serve as a component of Israel's defense. [passage omitted]

[Margalit] At the time, you refrained from announcing whether you would run as the Labor Party's candidate for prime minister. As a result of the tragic circumstances, this issue has now been clarified. If you are elected prime minister in 1996, will you also continue to serve as defense minister?

[Peres] It depends on what stage the peace process has reached. Not under any condition. I think that in order to properly manage the peace process, especially with regard to the Syrian track, and to implement our commitments to the Palestinians, it is crucial that the person handling the negotiations on the Israeli side also be in charge of the defense portfolio.

[Margalit] Thank you, Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister.

Expanded Strategic Cooperation With U.S. Detailed

TA0512104095 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
5 Dec 95 p A5

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Over the past few days, Defense Ministry and other forums have held discussions on various ideas for expanding the current framework of strategic cooperation between Israel and the United States, stipulated in the 1988 defense memorandum. Following are some of the ideas raised in the talks:

— Signing a new defense memorandum in which the United States explicitly pledges its commitment to maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge. Such an agreement, which can be anchored in congressional legislation, will make certain that Israel receives upgraded types of weapon systems.

— A firmer U.S. commitment regarding Israel's access to advanced military technology. The Bush administration had promised Israel a status similar to that of NATO on this issue, but the implementation of the promise, which entails congressional legislation, has been delayed for three years. Today, Israel enjoys the status of "a primary U.S. ally outside NATO."

— The significant expansion of advance storage of U.S. military equipment in Israel that could also serve the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in times of emergency. Among other things, it is being suggested that the United States store large quantities of plane and ship fuel. Today, the United States stores advanced ammunition, including tank and gun shells and antiaircraft missiles, worth approximately \$300 million, in Israel following agreements made during the Bush administration. U.S. emergency medical equipment is also stored in Israel.

— Signing an agreement on full defense cooperation against surface-to-surface missiles that would include intelligence cooperation, providing early warning information from satellites, and forming a U.S.-Israeli defense setup, combined with operational cooperation — as was the case during the Gulf war.

— Using Israeli airfields as bases for sorties of U.S. reconnaissance and surveillance planes in the region.

— Expanding joint exercises by U.S. and IDF troops and discussing regional cooperation with Jordan and Egypt in this area.

— Examining the option of moving the handling of Israeli affairs from the U.S. European Command to the Central Command, which includes most of the Middle East countries and whose main task is the protection of the Persian Gulf oil fields. The Americans have opposed this in the past for political reasons, primarily out of fear of determined opposition from Saudi Arabia.

Israel and the United States currently operate two joint frameworks in the strategic-security sphere: the military-political working group (which, in Israel, is called Ge'ut [Tide]), and the military aid working team. The Israeli delegations on both teams are headed by Defense Ministry Director General David Ivri.

Peres Said Unhappy With U.S. Shuttle Mission

TA0512114895 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew
5 Dec 95 pp 1, 2

[Report by Hemi Shalev and Ben Kaspi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jerusalem is anxiously awaiting the return from Damascus of U.S. mediator Dennis Ross, who is supposed to bring Syria's answers to Israel's main question: Will Hafiz al-Asad agree to change the format of the talks between the two countries?

Ross arrived in Israel last night for a short stopover in Jerusalem, where he dined with Foreign Minister Ehud Barak; Israeli peace coordinator Uri Savir; and Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States. They repeated to him the points of the new Israeli initiative: an upgrade in the level of talks, possibly to

that of foreign ministers; the hope of a summit between Peres and al-Asad in a few months; and a change in and acceleration of the pace of negotiations to a constant and intensive level.

Israel also suggests that Damascus stop focusing exclusively on security issues and proposes to set up four or five negotiating teams that will discuss — all at the same time, but possibly in different locations — the various components of the arrangement, including normalization, timetables, security, and withdrawal from the Golan.

Political sources in Jerusalem said last night that, at the end of his trip, Ross is due to brief U.S. President Bill Clinton and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Syria's readiness to deal with the involvement of a senior U.S. figure, including the personal involvement of Clinton himself, in the talks.

The sources maintained that Ross' visit to Damascus opens a new chapter in the negotiations with Syria, which will continue when Prime Minister Shim'on Peres meets with Clinton in Washington next week and later when Secretary of State Christopher arrives on a shuttle mission between Damascus and Jerusalem. A source involved in the negotiations said last night: "Within a month, we will know whether there is a chance to attain peace before the elections or whether the issue will be put off until 1997 at best."

Over the past few days, Peres and his planning team have been busy drafting the Israeli positions he will present to Clinton next week in Washington. Jerusalem sources believe that Peres will announce that Israel is willing to withdraw to the international border on the Golan Heights provided that peace with Syria is full and that it includes the establishment of full diplomatic relations with most of the Arab countries.

Peres believes that, from now on, the negotiations should be held at a "peace headquarters" which should be located as close to the Middle East as possible and should be conducted at an accelerated pace. Peres does not believe in the hesitant shuttle format the Americans have been employing so far. Yesterday, he promised the members of the ministerial political forum that he will convene the forum again before leaving for Washington and present them with the main points of the proposals he will make to Clinton. [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 5 December carries a related report by Shim'on Schiffer on page 2, adding that "despite the heavy veil of secrecy" imposed on the meeting with Ross last night, "Peres associates could not conceal the fact that expectations of Ross' attaining a breakthrough in the contacts with Syria

are low. It is believed that if al-Asad has an important message to relay, he will do so through Secretary of State Warren Christopher and not via Ross."

[The report adds that "two changes in the Israeli position are evident. First, unlike Rabin, Peres is willing to resume the discussions on the ambassadorial level and will not insist that the officers talks resume as well. Second, Evans and Novak guessed right: Peres will be ready to replace the Israeli demand for early warning ground stations with an aerial means of supervision in return for a Syrian commitment to enact full normalization during the initial stages of implementing the agreement."]

Beilin Comments on Ross Visit, Syria Track

TA0412165595 *Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English*
1500 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] Both Israel and the United States are hoping that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad will agree to a meeting with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Yosi Beilin told reporter David Ze'ev that such a move would help convince the opposition in Israel that a Golan Heights withdrawal is necessary for achieving peace.

[Begin recording] [Beilin] I agree that it will be much more difficult to convince people that peace with Syria is a real situation if there are no public gestures on the Syrian side.

[Ze'ev] An official source in Jerusalem characterized the talks by American envoy Dennis Ross in Israel and Syria as laying the groundwork for next week's meeting in Washington between Prime Minister Peres and U.S. President Bill Clinton. In the words of the official, if Peres is to present his position to the American President next week, he wants to know first that there is a receptive ear in Syria.

After talks here, Dennis Ross flies to Damascus and is to return to Israel to say whether there is a receptive ear in the Syrian capital. Minister Beilin stopped just short of saying that Israel's message to President al-Asad is a full withdrawal on the Golan Heights for full peace.

[Beilin] We never said it in these words. What we said was that the extent of our withdrawal on the Golan Heights will be parallel to the extent of peace proposed by the Syrians — and we stick to this view that was expressed by the late Prime Minister Rabin. And, we are going to present this view in the future. I myself believe that this formula is an open formula which went a long way since the beginning of the talks that is enough to begin very serious negotiations with the Syrians, if they are serious about peace.

[Ze'ev] The late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was very adamant that the negotiations had to resume on the senior military level, as had been agreed upon, at least according to the Americans and the Israelis. Is that still Israel's demand?

[Beilin] The major issue is the substance of the negotiations and is not the procedure. I believe that we should listen to some ideas about the procedure. Maybe there will be some new ideas from Syria after this visit of Ambassador Ross, and we will refer to the new ideas once we hear them. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Peres Promises Not To 'Dry Up' Golan Settlements

TA0412174095 *Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew*
1700 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of Dennis Ross' arrival in Jerusalem, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres met with representatives of the Golan settlers. The prime minister told them that he does not plan to delude or confuse them, that he will report to them what the exact situation really is, and that he understands them and the way they feel. Mr. Peres added that as far as is known at the moment, there has been no change in the Syrian position, perhaps only a slight change in the tone. He promised that the government would not dry up the settlements, and noted that he would check with the housing minister concerning the request of the head of the Qatzrin council to continue building. Peres stressed that it made sense to make peace with Syria if it means a comprehensive regional peace. He said that he hoped the dialogue with the settlers would continue.

Some of the settlers attending the meeting later told our correspondent Gil Litman that the prime minister had expressed appreciation for their deeds but had not made any promises.

Peres: 'Unequivocal Commitment' to Undivided Jerusalem

TA0512075695 *Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew*
0505 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday evening, in an important political statement on the Jerusalem issue, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres made an unequivocal commitment to the city's remaining undivided under Israeli sovereignty. At a ceremony in which the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was posthumously made an honorary resident of Jerusalem, Peres said Jerusalem has never been considered a subject for compromise, division, or shared rule. Our correspondent Dani Zaquen was at the ceremony:

[Begin recording] [Zaquen] The Jerusalem issue still hovers in the background of the talks with the Palestini-

ans, mainly because of its problematic nature. Yesterday, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres made a categorical declaration of intent with regard to the Israeli capital. At a ceremony in which the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was symbolically made a Jerusalemite, Peres revealed that among the other reasons for his and the late prime minister's agreement to concessions with the Palestinians in the framework of the Oslo A and Oslo B agreements was the desire to preclude any compromise on the issue of Jerusalem, which is more than any red line.

[Peres] The cornerstone of our political and strategic thinking always was and still remains not to touch Jerusalem. We have never thought — neither in the past, present, nor future — that Jerusalem can be a subject for compromise or division or that Jerusalem can become two capitals or the shared capital of two countries.

[Zagen] This city was at the center of Rabin's strategic and ideological thinking, and we will not forgive those who shouted traitor at the man who united Israel's capital, Peres said. The ceremony at the Jerusalem Theater was attended by Rabin's family, the Israeli president, cabinet ministers, the head of the opposition, Knesset members, and city notables. [passage omitted] [end recording]

'Crisis' in Hamas Policies, Support Viewed

TA0412155995 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON (DAVAR SHENI supplement) in Hebrew 4 Dec 95 pp 2, 3

[Article by Yosi Torpstein: "Hamas in the Oslo Trap"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently, certain Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists have been filled with remorse, regretting a misconception and a mishap. Those activists, some very prominent, believe that Hamas missed a golden opportunity to make an agreement with the Palestinian Authority [PA] 18 months ago, one that could have secured significant achievements for the movement. Nothing signed today could even come close to this.

Ghazi Hamad, a 31-years-old AL-WATAN editor, is one of those who believe that a mistake was made. Hamad, who was arrested last week by the Palestinian Preventive Security Service in Gaza [and later released], belongs to the Hamas young guard: They are not shaykhs in traditional robes, with thick beards and a serious and sour face of fundamentalist fanatics.

Married and a father of two daughters, Hamad is well educated, modern looking, and pleasant. He explains his stands in a clear and matter-of-factual language. He studied veterinary medicine at the University of Khartoum in Sudan and returned to his hometown,

Rafah, in 1987. In 1989, at the height of the intifadah, he was handed a five-year sentence by an Israeli military court for his activities on behalf of Hamas. Speaking fluent Hebrew, Hamad became the representative of the Hamas inmates. In addition to his post as editor, he has recently started teaching political studies at the Open American University in Gaza [name as published].

Before he was arrested, Hamad explained: "The signing of the Oslo A agreement came as a severe blow to us. We opened our eyes the following morning to a new reality in which 'Arafat had managed to push the Palestinian opposition and people into a corner.' He believes that, as a result, a new era has started, one requiring Hamas to change the course of its military and political operations.

He believes that when the PA was established, the first PLO officials who began arriving in the area were afraid of Hamas, believing it was a large and powerful organization that could frustrate the political process and use guns against them even if the price were to be a civil war. "We missed that opportunity," Hamad said. "We could have presented our conditions for an agreement with the PA and had most of them met. The movement, however, chose to continue on its path, that of military operations. Since then, our movement has lost its popular strength."

Hamas activists have been asking themselves the following questions recently: Is Hamas really in a crisis in view of this new reality? What path should it take today? What is Hamas' real political strength? Could internal conflicts expand and lead to a rift or perhaps a disintegration of the movement? "Every time we meet, we hold debates regarding Hamas' future path, attitudes toward the PA, and daily affairs," Hamad admits.

According to public opinion polls held in the territories since Oslo A was signed, Hamas has suffered a serious blow to its prestige and standing. Earlier polls showed that Hamas enjoyed the support of 45 percent of the people who took part in elections for various organizations such as trade unions and chambers of commerce.

Very few polls were held at that time, but since the Oslo agreement was signed, Palestinian research centers have been conducting many methodical studies, the results of which came as a surprise to the Hamas leaders. According to the Nabulus Center for Palestinian Research and Studies, only 13 to 17 percent of the population support Hamas. Last October, for example, Hamas was found to have the support of 13 percent of those polled, coming second to Fatah which scored 52.5 percent.

'Imad al-Faluji, the publisher of AL-WATAN and a Hamas leader from Gaza, denies that Hamas is losing the support of the Palestinian public. "How can anyone compare Hamas and Fatah the way the polls do? Hamas is still regarded a secret organization, while Fatah went public a long time ago. Fatah is the ruling party. When asked by pollsters who they support, most people are afraid to express support for Hamas."

Hence, al-Faluji believes, the undecided votes found in the polls (between 20 to 30 percent), to a large extent represent the hidden electoral potential of Hamas, Fatah's primary political rival. "Those who according to the polls support no party, do not in fact support Fatah, although it is the strong leading party." He believes that reliable polls correctly showing the real distribution of power could be conducted only after Hamas sets up a political party that openly and legitimately operates on the political scene.

Fakhri 'Abd-al-Latif, aged 29, owns a store specializing in religious books in Gaza. He joined Hamas as a young boy in the early 1980's. Since then, he has served four prison terms for his pro-Hamas activities. Today, he is the spokesman of the Islamic National Salvation Party, which represents Hamas. He believes that some 40 percent of the Palestinian public support Hamas.

According to him, there has been a certain drop in the number of people who attend prayers at the mosques, when compared to the days of the intifadah, but this does not mean that there has been a decline in support for Hamas. During the intifadah, the mosques served as launching pads for operations against the "Israeli occupation." Frequent commercial strikes and a growing feeling of despair and frustration brought many people to the mosques, some seeking faith and others looking for company with which to spend the long free hours. 'Abd-al-Latif believes that the situation in the mosques has not changed substantially — they are still full. "We conducted an overall examination of moods before we formed the party, and the results were reassuring. They showed that the party is highly appreciated. Soon, we will conduct more methodical surveys," he said.

The issues on Hamas' current agenda could perhaps attest to the degree of erosion its stands have undergone, going from exclusively focusing on conducting an armed struggle against Israel to political activities. In fact, the deeply embedded pragmatic nature of Hamas is evident from its very dealing with the following issues: holding contacts with the PA, hoping to attain a reconciliatory agreement that would give Hamas a significant chunk of the government institutions and budgets for the "construction of the homeland"; stopping military operations (terror attacks) against Israeli targets; setting

up a party that accepts the rules of the political game; and taking part in the elections for the PA council.

The pragmatic nature of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood Movement runs deep in Hamas' veins. The brotherhood devoted itself to teaching Islam starting with the very basics, and Hamas has always considered itself part of the brotherhood. This is a tactical, rather than strategic pragmatism. The goal has been and still is to establish an Islamic Palestinian state in Palestine, instead of the State of Israel, and to launch jihad (holy war) against Israel for the attainment of this goal.

The pragmatic line is seen in the principle that there is the right timing for every act. There is no need to have everything now, and circumstances and constraints created by the political reality must be taken into consideration. The Palestinian public no longer supports terror attacks leading to sharp Israeli reactions that strike at the Palestinian soft spot — the economy. The Palestinians wish to see the PA assume power over the West Bank and improve their standard of living. Hence, the PA has gained much power, established its authority, and made it unequivocally clear that it would tolerate neither competition over its authority nor the continuation of military activities that could jeopardize the agreements it made with Israel. Hamas has not carried out a terror attack in months, probably due to an unwritten agreement with the PA.

The salvation party's platform, as presented by 'Abd-al-Latif, reflects the current Hamas trends. The first tier the platform addresses, he says, focuses on providing the Palestinian citizens with social, economic, and cultural services, mainly in terms of upgrading the standards of living and level of education. The second tier deals with the role the party would play in managing the Palestinian society, namely partaking in government. The third tier deals with opposition in principle to the Oslo agreements.

"At the same time," 'Abd-al-Latif explains, "our platform makes it clear that we will seek to neutralize the negative impact of the agreements while bolstering the Palestinian political entity. We are not blind. We answer the desires of the Palestinian people. We will not impose Islamic law when a Palestinian state is founded."

To the great dismay of many Hamas members, this line of thought is leading the movement in the direction of major inner conflict which threatens to eliminate the original, determined, and military Hamas. The military struggle for Palestine had been Hamas' *raison d'être*, the very reason it was founded and differentiated from the Muslim Brotherhood. Leaders of the Hamas military wing and radical political hard-liners are asking today: What is to become of Hamas' unique standing —

that which earned it such extensive support among the Palestinian public — if this principle is suspended?

These activists, abroad and in the territories, are not happy with the establishment of a political party and the shift in focus from military to political activity. The major question, however, is whether they will eventually accept the situation and for how long. "Despite differences, Hamas is a single body. We have the shura council, which is the body that makes the decisions by a majority vote," all the Hamas activists point out in a seeming self-defense reflex. Al-Faluji explains that all Hamas members must accept the decisions. The same holds true for the establishment of the party. "There is no dispute; it has been decided," he states. According to him, the movement is now gaining power in the social sphere. New clinics and day-care centers have opened, and aid to the poor has expanded. There is no crisis, and there is no disintegration, he says.

In the background stands the basic political Hamas view of the current reality. "I am certain that the political process will not succeed," Hamad says. "It will work for another year or two, but eventually, the Palestinians will come to their senses when they realize that Israel does not intend to allow the establishment of a truly independent Palestinian state. In the meantime, like highly disciplined soldiers, we will wait until the time comes for us to pick up our strategic line — jihad. This will not create a crisis. Even armies do not fight all the time. There are periods of waiting and practicing." Hamad finds support for this view in remarks by central Fatah leaders who, he says, told him: "Some day, when we rise from our current weak position and gain more power, we will rip the agreements with Israel into shreds. They are bad for the Palestinian people."

Presently, it seems that the firm religious conviction of the activists; the widespread infrastructure of philanthropic, educational, and professional institutions Hamas is operating; and the concentration of efforts on the political scene provide the movement with a safety net against losing the public's support in view of the changing circumstances.

Palestinian, Egypt Elections Criticized

TA0412133895 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST
in English 4 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Egyptian Election Fallout"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] If any proof were needed that elections are not always a triumph for democracy, Egypt's parliamentary vote last week provided it with a vengeance. Advocates of democracy, like all those who look up to Egypt as the trend-setter in the Arab world, must have winced at the official results.

The National Democratic Party, which has ruled Egypt since the Naguib-al-Nasir revolution, received 90 percent of the vote in the first round. And not a single candidate identified with the opposition managed to win a seat. Such results can only mean that, for all its closeness to the West and dependence on American largesse, the Egyptian regime is closer to such dictatorships as Iraq's and Libya's than to democratic systems of government.

Not that the Egyptian parliament has ever been anything like its Western equivalents. The country is run by a dictator elected without opposition, and the parliament has little more power than a debating society. Serving mostly as the regime's rubber stamp, it exists mostly to mollify the West and provide the opposition with a forum in which to vent its grievances.

Nor were past elections much freer. They were always controlled by the government through ballot stuffing, bogus voter lists, forgeries, and intimidation. But in the past the opposition parties were allowed to win a respectable number of seats.

This time, with the threat of Islamic fundamentalism more ominous, the regime has apparently decided that opposition parties, particularly the Moslem Brotherhood, would be kept out of parliament. The second round this coming Wednesday will probably result in the complete elimination of all opposition representation.

Particularly disconcerting is that the government seems to have decided that not only Islamicists would be kept out, but even such respectable parties as the Wafd. The Wafd newspaper, still free to criticize the regime within prescribed limits, has charged that, "No election campaign in Egypt's history has ever been so violent and so drenched in blood." The ruling party's hoodlums, says the paper, have not only intimidated voters but caused 20 deaths and dozens of injuries. Even the Interior Ministry admits that election violence has caused 13 deaths. For Israel these results are deeply disappointing. The real hope for peace in the region does not lie in grandiose dreams of sudden transformations in attitudes, but in the gradual liberalization of Arab society. Only when democracy takes hold in all the neighboring countries can Israel hope for a "New Middle East" in which strategic assets, and geographic and topographic advantages may become insignificant. Such liberalization, albeit painfully slow, seems to be occurring in Jordan under the guidance of King Husayn. But if the elections are any indication, Egypt seems to be moving in the opposite direction.

Unfortunately, the elections for the Palestinian Council, scheduled for January, are more likely to follow the

Egyptian example. They are touted in the world as "democratic elections," and some leading world figures are expected to lend their prestige and approval to the exercise by acting as observers.

But the fact is that Yasir 'Arafat, like Husni Mubarak, Saddam Husayn, and Hafiz al-Asad, is running unopposed to the presidency of the council. And it is likely that council candidates — whether members of Fatah or the opposition parties — will be unable to run unless they are approved by the Palestinian Authority. The results — an overwhelming majority for 'Arafat supporters and token representation for opposition parties — can be predicted with safety.

There is, then, very little reason to hold the elections. But the PLO expects the ritual to constitute an important step toward giving 'Arafat's rule and the establishment of a Palestinian state their final legitimacy. As Henry Kissinger has frequently pointed out, areas in which elections are held inevitably become sovereign, regardless of the nature of the elections. That voting for the Palestinian Council will also be held in Jerusalem should therefore give Israelis pause.

Israel has no illusions about the elections' results. In fact, the government hopes nothing will happen to prevent an overwhelming 'Arafat victory. But it does, at least officially, still hope that within two months after 'Arafat becomes the elected president and thereby acquire complete authority, he will convene the Palestine National Council for the purpose of repealing the clauses in the Palestinian Covenant which call for dismantling Israel. Otherwise, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has said, the peace train will come to a halt.

But if 'Arafat's recent pronouncements are any indication, he hopes that his post-elections legitimacy will obviate the need to repeal the Covenant. On his recent U.S. visit he said he could not change the Covenant, and on Saturday in Gaza he told a Meretz delegation that he does not understand why Israelis are so obsessed with the Covenant's repeal.

Obviously, neither Palestinians nor Egyptians see the role and purpose of elections quite in the way Israelis do.

Baraq, Russia's Grachev Discuss Relations, Iran

TA0412170595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English
1500 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Russia's Defense Minister Pavel Grachev met this afternoon with members of captured Israeli airman Ron Arad's family in an effort to help them. He also met with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who had this to say after the meeting.

[Begin Baraq recording] We talked about the need to find ways to cooperate on the economy, cultural relationship, education, and many other areas. He talked about the independence of the Russian policy, the fact that neighbors should not expect Russia not to develop its relations with Israel. At the same time, we should not expect Russia to stop its good relations with all our neighbors, but he hoped that it all will flow in the right direction. I emphasized our worry about Iran, the fact that its kind of ultra-fanatic regime is spreading terror and trying to achieve a nuclear capability, and that we think that all neighbors should bear it in mind and do whatever is possible to limit the potentials of threat and risk from this country. [end recording]

No-Confidence Motion on Poverty Defeated

TA0412191595 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1
Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 4 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The motion of no confidence in the government submitted by the Likud due to the dimensions of poverty in the country was defeated this evening in the Knesset by a majority of 53 Knesset members who voted against it, 44 votes in favor, and 5 abstentions. [passage omitted]

NRP Demands Replacement of Religious Affairs Minister

TA0512060095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English
0500 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Religious Party [NRP] are demanding that Prime Minister Peres replace Shim'on Shetrit as religious affairs minister, and they will table a no-confidence motion unless he does so. The NRP move follows the decision by Peres and Shetrit to set up a committee to decide on what rabbis may and may not say on subjects of national importance. Knesset Member Avraham Ravitz from the Degel Hatora Party has urged the chief rabbis not to cooperate with such a committee.

Religious Affairs Minister Shetrit has appointed Asher Segev as acting director general of the Religious Affairs Ministry. Shetrit decided not to extend the term of the current Director General Gershon Metzger, who will remain in the ministry as an adviser to the minister.

Radical Rabbis Seen as Threat to NRP Leaders

TA0312172095 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
3 Dec 95 p B1

[Commentary by Amnon Dankner: "Get Yourself a Rabbi, and You Have Got Yourself an Enemy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When Zvulun Hammer and other NRP [National Religious Party] members call for soul-searching and seek to propel their right-wing party toward the political center, they are not only acting out of an authentic desire to mend the gaping rifts in Israeli society, but out of cold political calculations. There is the real threat that large and important blocs of NRP voters may abandon the party. These are the people who voted for the NRP in recent years despite holding moderate political views. Their votes are the result of education, habit, and support for the NRP as the institution that maintains an important network of state-religious schools.

This public's clear revulsion for the NRP's political extremism, against the background of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination, has not been missed by Zvulun Hammer's sensitive eyes.

There is something rather amusing in the fact that now — after recognizing the Oslo agreements as a fait accompli and trying to push the NRP back toward the political center — Hammer and his associates, who were once known as the "Oslo gang" after the Tel Aviv case in which they planned their takeover of the NRP and its subsequent adoption of extreme right-wing positions, now once again fit the same moniker. It has just begun, Zvulun Hammer told me last week, and it will be a long process. This is true, but the real question is whether or not the NRP can survive this process in one piece.

The party's main obstacle on the path to moderation and an acceptance of reality is the large group of NRP rabbis, yeshiva heads, and settlement rabbis. For a large proportion of the party's voters, these rabbis — and not the politicians — are the real leaders. Anyone trying to placate the moderate voters will arouse the holy wrath of these rabbis and their flock, who even after Rabin's death still wield awesome power. This, even though the members of their community have a lot of dirt on them. The residents of Jewish settlements or students at national religious yeshivas do not have to read the papers or the reports of police investigations in order to know which rabbi preached what.

After several intensive years, especially the last two, of holding halakic, political, and especially halakic-political discussions in synagogues and yeshivas, this public knows exactly who issued Din Rodef [an edict permitting the killing of a Jew who endangers the life

of other Jews if by doing so the latter are saved] or Din Moser [an edict permitting the punishment, including the death penalty, of anyone handing over Jews or their property to gentiles], who preached violence and actively incited against the government, and who issued edicts calling on soldiers to disobey orders. In short, they know which rabbis recklessly and irresponsibly made statements that will continue to reverberate throughout every corner of the country.

The amazing fact is that none of these rabbis were excoriated by their neighbors, students, or colleagues. There is a substantial public in the settlements and in the yeshivas that is truly engaged in soul-searching, but they will not go so far as to finger guilty rabbis or remove them from influential positions. A friend from the settlement of 'Ofra recently explained to me that even he, who is sick to death of these rabbis and their statements, is psychologically incapable of speaking out against them. A secular person cannot understand this, he told me, but respect for rabbis is so deeply ingrained among religious Jews, that it is very hard to dare question them, much less publicly accuse them.

Even a senior official from the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip [CJSJSG], who told me that Rabbi Nahum Rabinovich [one of the rabbis suspected of sanctioning Rabin's assassination] would be forced to resign as head of the Hesder Yeshiva in Ma'ale Adumim, made me promise not to quote him and clarified that Rabinovich would not be ousted now, even as his harsh remarks continue to shock the country, but quietly, sometime in the future.

When the NRP began to move back toward the political center last week, the council rushed to drag the party back to the right; however, it is not the CJSJSG that scares Hammer and his colleagues. The real threat comes from the rabbis in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip and other radical rabbis from inside Israel. These rabbis are staying mum for the time being. Their silence, however, will not last for long, and the more the NRP tries to blur its nationalist image, the closer the confrontation between the rabbis and its political leadership looms.

The rabbis are currently on the defensive, peering with astonished and fearful eyes as the people around them are hauled in for questioning by the police, but one cannot expect them to stay quiet for long. They are seething with fury, not only at Hammer's political moves and the interrogations, but also at what appears to be a growing trend to turn halakic debates and discussions into grounds for criminal charges. They feel — with what is a certain degree of justification on their part — that the authorities' careful perusal of

every rabbinical edict based on the Halaka could lead to the prosecution of rabbis guilty of nothing more than teaching, quoting, and drawing conclusions from the Halakic foundations laid down by generations of spiritual leaders.

The problem is that the Halakic differentiation between Jews and gentiles can easily be construed as discriminatory, racist, and even murderous. Is it conceivable, the rabbis ask, to be imprisoned for quoting passages from Maimonides or for drawing the relevant conclusions?

Herein lies the root of the problem: The rabbis are right from their point of view, but it is this very viewpoint that constitutes the cancer. The Halaka itself proposes numerous ways to preclude the discussion of issues that could cause damage far outweighing any potential benefit. This would most certainly include the most galling Halakic edicts. The Halaka has safety valves that permit followers to back away from dangerous paths, whether in the interest of "putting the world in order" or through observing "the ways of peace" and so forth.

These rabbis' insistence on continuing to deal with these issues under the banner of intellectual and religious freedom is a big lie. There is no chance for any new thinking or moderation among the radical NRP rabbis who set the tone. That is why Hammer and his colleagues face a hard, if not impossible, job — much more than people think.

Labor To Continue Contacts With Religious Parties
TA0312122595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1200 GMT 3 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Labor Party's coalition negotiations team has decided to continue the negotiations with SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], United Torah Jewry [UTJ], and the National Religious Party [NRP], despite the opposition of Meretz. Sources in the coalition team told our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel that the negotiations with SHAS and the UTJ are at a more advanced stage than those with the NRP. They also said that the decision to establish a ministerial committee for dealing with the issue of Reform conversion is important as an effort to find a solution to the demands of the two ultra-Orthodox parties.

Rally Held for Ramat Gan Rabbi
TA0312055195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English
0500 GMT 3 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Ramat Gan, a rally in support of the city's Chief Rabbi Ya'akov Ari'el was held last night. Hundreds turned out to protest against the intention of Religious Affairs Minister Shetrit to dismiss Rabbi Ari'el for an article he wrote two years

ago. Speaking at the gathering, Rabbi Hayim Druckman charged that it was an evil hand which put the article Rabbi Ari'el wrote on the desk of Minister Shetrit. Rabbi Ari'el said that the attack against him was directed towards all rabbis in Israel and the Torah of Israel and that the murderer Yig'al 'Amir does not belong to the people of Israel.

Knesset Member [MK] Yitzhaq Levi of the National Religious Party [NRP] said his party would present a motion of no-confidence in the government over the affair.

Religious Affairs Minister Shim'on Shetrit says, meanwhile, he has not yet decided whether to begin proceedings for the removal of Rabbi Ari'el. Shetrit said he is authorized to submit a request to the Chief Rabbinate to convene a rabbinical hearing on the matter. Shetrit said he was waiting for a response from Rabbi Ari'el on a number of questions he had asked and that he could morally back down from the issue.

Two MK's have called on rabbis to refuse to appear for police questioning. NRP member Sha'ul Yahalom and Yosef Ba-Gad, formerly of Moledet, called for an end to what they called the witch-hunt against right-wing rabbis.

Central Command Restricts Movements of Activists
TA0512055595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English
0500 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the Central Command has issued several orders to limit the movement of several right-wing activists. Shmu'el Cytron of Qiryat Arba' was placed under administrative detention for three months, Uri Amsali of Qiryat Arba' was issued with an order severely restricting his movements for the next six months, and Oren Dana and Re'uven Ben-Hayim have been barred from entering the West Bank for the next six months.

Soldier Indicted, Connected to Rabin's Murder
TA0412170995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English
1500 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Northern Command military court has indicted Israeli soldier Arik Schwartz on charges connected to Yitzhaq Rabin's murder. Schwartz was charged with illegally taking IDF [Israel Defense Forces] weapons and equipment and passing them on to Yig'al and Hagay 'Amir. Schwartz was also charged with providing Yig'al 'Amir with the bullets used in the shooting.

IDF Presents New Multiyear Plan

TA0312190595 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
3 Dec 95 pp A1, A2

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] new multiyear plan, Composite [Mirqam] 2000, will be presented to Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, for approval this month. The plan, prepared by the IDF's Planning Branch, headed by Major General 'Uzi Dayan, outlines the principles of building up a military force in the years 1996-2000 and will be the basis for the annual work plans.

Dayan has already presented to Peres the plan's main projects for a discussion that was held on the defense budget, but the prime minister has still not received a detailed presentation of Composite 2000 and next year's work plan.

Approval of the multiyear plan is hindered by a budget deficit of some 500 million shekels. The defense establishment has begun to prepare for a cut in its multiyear plan, but its heads have warned Peres about the tough repercussions of such a reduction.

The prime minister last week imposed on his economic adviser Ilan Flato the task of finding financial resources for the gaps in the defense budget in coordination with the Treasury and the defense establishment.

A senior defense source said yesterday: "There are some components that make the 1996 budget very tight unless supplementary budgetary sources are found or we manage to find a compromise in which the Treasury covers some of the missing budget and we cover the rest.

The new plan is the fifth in a series of multiyear composite plans that the IDF has instituted since 1991 [sentence as published]. The plan is based on the assumption that the peace process will continue, and that in the coming years the IDF will continue to be called on to deal with routine security and the war against terrorism while maintaining preparedness and implementing the political accords.

Composite 2000 continues the IDF's modernization plan on two levels: integrating new combat systems and advanced military technology, in addition to upgrading existing systems, such as armor and artillery.

The late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin decided that there would not be any changes in the structure of the force and the IDF's combat doctrine before comprehensive peace is achieved and it is tested for several years. The senior defense source noted: "We are building an army that maintains its offensive and defensive capabil-

ity even in normal times and certainly in emergencies in order to make sure that basic systems continue functioning even if something goes wrong along the way. Even a signed peace treaty is no guarantee that it will be upheld. As long as there is no comprehensive peace, and it has been proven that the peace is stable, we will not build a different type of army."

The IDF spokesman refused to permit HA'ARETZ to meet with officers in the Planning Branch for a survey of the multiyear plan.

The IDF's Main Missions: Routine Defense and War Against Terrorism, Maintaining Preparedness, and Implementing Political Accords

The peace process will continue, and the "window of opportunities" will remain open — that is the basic assumption behind Composite 2000, the IDF's multiyear plan, which outlines the building of Israel's military force for 1996-2000. The plan worked out by the Planning Branch will be brought to the prime minister's approval this month.

The plan states that the IDF's main missions in the coming years are: routine security and the war against terrorism, maintaining preparedness, especially in the north, and implementing the political accords. During the implementation of the plan, the long-term threats to Israel — foremost of which is the danger that Iran will obtain nuclear weapons and the continued arming of the states in the region with surface-to-surface missiles and chemical weapons — will continue.

The window of opportunities will enable the IDF to continue to modernize its forces and simultaneously to invest large amounts in dealing intensively with routine security and the war against terrorism.

The main repercussions of the peace process are on West Bank redeployment: transferring military camps from the West Bank to the Green Line, setting up new camps on the West Bank, reducing training areas, fencing and paving roads, and dealing with restrictions on freedom of action and on gathering intelligence in the territories. The plan takes into account growing friction and terrorism. During the period covered by Composite 2000, negotiations for a permanent settlement with the Palestinians are anticipated.

Nevertheless, the multiyear plan does not call for basic changes in the structure of the military force because of the peace process.

Composite 2000 takes into account several scenarios: ongoing terrorism alongside political negotiations, reaching agreements with Syria and the Palestinians, or

a crisis in the talks, which will lead to a halt in the peace process.

From an analysis of the plan's efforts to bolster the IDF, it appears that the army is still building up its strength for the possibility of a war with Syria. In maneuvers held from time to time by the large formations, the possibility of an overall war is taken into account.

The new multiyear plan continues to reduce the army's routine activity in order to divert resources to the buildup. In the coming years, the size of the regular army will continue growing because of increasingly large drafts, but the standing army will be cut. Civilians working for the army will be reduced by 18.5 percent and reserve service will be reduced by 13 percent.

The IDF will cut down on the number of vehicles used by officers and on new construction and equipment given to draftees. Savings in driving and flight time will continue. An effort will be made to keep training at the current level.

In recent years, the IDF has been undergoing a process that can be called "dual modernization": renewing existing combat systems, such as tanks and traditional artillery, in addition to developing and procuring new systems for combat, intelligence, and communications, especially those manufactured by the Israeli defense industries, thereby maintaining a high level of competence even during the interim period, until the new measures are integrated in significant numbers.

The Israeli industries — REFA'EL [Armament Development Authority], Elbit, the Israel Aircraft Industries, and the Israel Military Industries — are world leaders in advanced military technologies, such as unmanned aerial vehicles and aerial weaponry. Hundreds of millions of shekels are invested annually in these projects.

Composite 2000's main development and arming effort is aimed at bolstering the firing power of the ground forces and the Air Force in order to assure a better erosion ratio than in the past: hitting the enemy hard in a short time with minimum losses to the IDF.

Composite 2000 is the fifth in a series of Composite plans introduced in 1991. It includes detailed planning for the allocation of resources in the IDF and the building of a force over the coming two years, and in lesser detail for the three years after that.

Answering a Threat From More Distant States: Development of the Arrow and the Ofeq Spy Satellite

Composite 2000 takes into account the development of threats by distant states that do not border on Israel,

such as Iraq and Iran, and especially the fear that Iran will obtain nuclear weapons in the coming years.

The answer provided by the plan is based on several layers:

— Deterrence: based on Israel's image in the states of the region as a nuclear power with long-range missiles and a strong Air Force, which can be operated over long distances.

— Active defense: based on the Homa plan for Israel's defense with surface-to-surface missiles, Arrow ballistic missiles in particular.

The Arrow's development will continue over the coming years. The United States agreed to allocate \$200 million over five years for the project. When the development is completed an operational missile battery will be deployed at a site already decided on.

Additional components of the system will operate around the Arrow, such as a fire-control radar and a command and control system.

— Passive defense: Israeli residents have already experienced sealed rooms and gas masks during the Gulf war. That plan will continue.

— Early warning and strategic intelligence: The Ofeq spy satellite, which went into orbit several months ago, will continue. The satellite can photograph distant states, and according to foreign sources, its camera identifies objects of 1.5 meters and larger. Israel has early warning against the launching of surface- to-surface missiles from American satellites, based on an agreement dating from the Gulf war. The United States operates a special line of communications to provide Israel with early warning.

— Offensive capability: development of aerial capability for long distances. The Air Force will get F-15A's. The development of a command and control system will also be needed.

New Merkava Model — in Development; Artillery Units Will Be Upgraded; An Additional Training Base To Be Established

The IDF's ground forces bear the ongoing defense burden in the territories and Lebanon. Their mission during wartime is defending the territory of the state, transferring the war to the enemy, and occupying territory, which will cause the enemy to ask for a cease-fire.

The Composite 2000 plan has five main development directions for the ground forces: improving the erosion

ratio, upgrading logistics in the field, developing command and communications systems, and improving the ability to break through obstacles.

— Improving the erosion ratio: The IDF wants to destroy a large number of enemy targets while keeping damage to our forces to a minimum. Most of the investments in upgrading tanks and artillery units and developing new measures are intended to achieve that aim.

The Armored Corps will continue to absorb Merkava Mark-3 tanks. The pace of production will remain as decided on three years ago at a cost of hundreds of millions of shekels annually. It was recently reported that the tank development team, headed by Major General (reserves) Yisra'el Tal, adviser to the defense minister, is developing a new model Merkava Mark-4. The Merkava project includes introducing improvements in the existing tanks. Efforts to improve the tanks' defenses and ammunition will continue.

The Artillery Corps will complete in the coming years its modernization plan, which includes upgrading the fleet of M-109 artillery, the corp's main force, and its MLRS, Multiple Launch Rocket System. The IDF absorbed several MLRS launchers and recently signed a deal to procure additional launchers, which will reach Israel in 1998.

The Ground Forces Command will continue procuring antitank missiles of various types — Israeli-made missiles and U.S.-made Tow-2 missiles. Former Defense Minister Moshe Arens wrote in his memoir "War and Peace in the Middle East" that Israel has developed antitank missiles "more advanced than anything the United States has."

— Logistics: The logistics branch plans to renew the fleet of trucks and tank carriers. Procurement of new jeeps is also expected.

— Command and control: The conduct of war on the modern battlefield requires the transfer of intelligence, orders, and reports in real time, and as precise a battle picture as possible in the commands. For that purpose, modernization of the command in the division, the basic formation of the ground forces, is planned in order to make command and control more effective. Communications systems and tactical data communications networks will be deployed. Procurement of Searcher unmanned aerial vehicles [UAV's] for collecting intelligence at short distances will continue.

— Breaking through obstacles: The Engineering Corps will continue absorbing Puma armored personnel carriers developed by Israel.

— Training: In coming years, a Training, Control, and Debriefing [TCD] base, the future training base of the ground forces in Ze'elim, will be set up where large units will train with the aid of simulators. A TCD base will be set up by REFA'EL and the U.S. company Loral at a cost of tens of millions of dollars.

The Navy Will Complete Its Modernization Plan

The Navy's main mission is defending the state's coastlines during peacetime and wartime, and when the need arises, to impose a naval blockade and safeguard Israel's shipping lanes.

In the coming years, the Navy will complete the modernization plan of its vessels, which started in the 1980's. Beginning in 1997, three Dolphin submarines being built in Germany will be added to the three Saar-5 vessels built in the United States. The upgrading of Saar-4 (Nirit) missile boats will continue.

The Navy's procurement plans within the framework of Composite 2000 include obtaining systems to arm Saar-5 vessels and the submarines; procuring Baraq missiles, which are manufactured by the Israel Aircraft Industries and REFA'EL and whose procurement was held up because of budgetary problems; and upgrading the coastal early warning system.

The Air Force Will Procure F-15A's, UAV's, and AMRAAM's [advanced medium range air-to-air missiles]

The Air Force will be the main beneficiary of Composite 2000. The Air Force will have a main role in implementing two goals: reducing the erosion ratio on the battlefield and providing a response to threats from distant countries. The Air Force's objectives are to achieve air superiority, defend the country's skies, provide an answer to the surface-to-surface missiles, and prevent expeditionary forces from reaching the front.

In the coming years, the Air Force will absorb new aircraft and helicopters, upgrade existing aircraft and helicopters, and procure new weapons and reconnaissance systems made in the United States and Israel.

— Fighter aircraft: In two years, the Air Force will start to absorb 25 F-15A's (called Ra'am in the IDF), which will provide it with assault capabilities over long ranges, at night, and under any weather conditions. The cost of these aircraft, the most advanced exported by the United States, is \$2.1 billion. The Air Force will also invest tens of millions of dollars in upgrading earlier model F-15's and F-16's. During implementation of the multiyear plan, the Air Force will have to choose its future fighter plane.

— UAV's: Israeli industry is a world leader in that field. It showed its ability in that field with the Heron UAV, which remained operational for a long time. The Air Force wants to spend tens of millions of dollars on an American UAV, which would replace old equipment still in service. In addition, the absorption of Searcher UAV's, manufactured by Israel Aircraft Industries, will continue.

— Helicopters: The Air Force wants to complete its Blackhawk squadron. It currently has 10 helicopters (there are usually 24 aircraft in a squadron). According to the plan, Yasur and Cobra helicopters will be upgraded and Panther naval helicopters will be procured.

— Light aircraft: The Dornir 28, which is used for patrols and reconnaissance, is expected to be replaced. U.S. aid funds will be allocated for that purpose. The United States does not manufacture similar aircraft, and the Air Force will apparently procure larger Beechcraft planes.

— Refueling planes: Aerial refueling is important for long-distance activity. The force plans to procure additional Boeings and install on them Israeli-made fueling systems.

— Armaments: The force will procure radar-guided AMRAAM missiles, which can intercept enemy aircraft at a range of tens of kilometers. A year ago, the U.S. Administration gave Israel permission in principle to receive the missiles.

Arming with Israeli-made advanced weapons systems — REFA'EL's fourth generation short-range air-to-air missiles and sophisticated air-to-surface missiles — will continue. The United States has also agreed to provide Israel with Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, which have an upgraded homing device. All these are meant to provide Israel with aerial superiority and jam the enemy's aerial defense.

With the aim of improving an attack's accuracy, laser-guided bombs will be upgraded and various sensors will be developed: a radar for the F-16, which will operate at night and in any weather conditions, and an optical sensor to transmit photographs in real time day and night. Procurement of Lightning and Lantern targeting and armament pods will continue.

— Intelligence: Systems for collecting intelligence in real time and distributing it to the forces on the ground will be integrated. It has already been reported that Israel is developing with U.S. firms an electrooptical photographing system for aircraft.

Attempts To Close 'Arutz 7 Radio Criticized

TA0412065795 (Internet) 'Arutz 7 News Service
in English 1 Dec 95

[Commentary by Rabbi Zalman Melamed, chairman of the Board of Directors of 'Arutz-7, and Dean of the Bet-El Yeshiva Center: "Silence Is Not Always Golden"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There are those within Israel, from Meretz and elsewhere, who are tirelessly endeavoring to close 'Arutz 7. There is no need to explain to the station's listeners that 'Arutz 7 is extremely careful in its style, more so than any other media outlet. Since its founding, 'Arutz 7 has emblazoned on its banner the goal of unity and not divisiveness; emphasizing the good while downplaying the bad, as the Torah hints to us: You should have a spade among your weapons [literally, a commandment to a soldier to cover up his excrement] (Deut. 24). Cover up the ugliness and do not reveal it. Over the years, this has been one of the basic guidelines of our programs.

It is true, however, that 'Arutz 7 is different from the other news media. It provides a platform for opinions that find almost no other outlet. The station was established to articulate outlooks based on belief in G-d, His Torah, and His people; to give expression to the love of the Land of Israel, our homeland—the inheritance of our fathers, the land of G-d.

The station was established to strengthen unity within the Jewish people, and from the first moment on, 'Arutz 7 aspired to produce a dialogue between the political Right and Left. We dreamt that via the station we could engender a meaningful discussion between segments of the public regarding the desired path of the Jewish people; discussions meant to broaden understanding between sectors. We believed and still believe that the gaps between sectors look much bigger than they really are. All this is due to a lack of communication and an excess of superficial disputes. Serious and profound discussions between men of letters were and, to this day, are not taking place. To our dismay, there was no answer to our call.

And now, as the rift in the nation is approaching the abyss, it is forbidden to allow such a situation to continue; there is an urgent need for dialogue amongst ourselves, without exchanging accusations. Instead, all concerned must understand the need to listen to each other, and to clearly define both the common ground and the controversial. I am certain that the common ground is greater. This approach will definitely halt the widening of the rift that is occurring within the people.

If voices are silenced it will not be possible to rectify the situation and calm everyone down.

For many years Abie Natan broadcast a minority opinion that was not acceptable to the majority, but no one prevented the broadcasts. Today as well there is no right to muzzle us. The 'Arutz-7 listening public is entitled to media that gives it the spiritual content it seeks. 'Arutz-7 listeners require media that contains more Judaism; media that is not provocative, without racy love songs. 'Arutz-7 listeners have the right to choose Hebrew and not foreign songs, more Hassidic melodies, short segments on our heritage, and programming with social value.

I will not apologize and I find no need to reply to the false accusations which allege that 'Arutz-7 is engaging in incitement. If there really was incitement, then the

individual guilty of the act would have been arrested and investigated. Is the spreading of words of Jewish culture and tradition, full of love and appreciation of Eretz Yisra'el, incitement? Is the broadcasting of opinions opposed to the Left considered incitement? If one of the announcers would have let himself be dragged into the fray, then there would be a great hue and cry, but even that would pale by comparison with the rest of the station's programming. If incitement in the media were to be carefully measured, there is no doubt that we would be the last on the list, if appearing at all. We will not consent to being muzzled, nor is such a thing even possible.

Russian Envoy Posuvalyuk Visits, Meets Leaders

Views Peace, Ties With King

*JN0412184595 Amman Jordan Television Network
in Arabic 1800 GMT 4 Dec 95*

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received Viktor Posuvalyuk, envoy of Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, who conveyed an oral message from His Excellency President Yeltsin. The message expressed congratulations of the Russian president and foreign minister to His Majesty King Husayn on his 60th birthday.

The two sides discussed the peace process in the region and its latest developments. The Russian envoy expressed his country's appreciation for the achievements Jordan has made through signing the Jordanian-Israeli peace process, which is cornerstone of stability in the region.

The two sides stressed the need for further efforts and bilateral work to make progress on the remaining tracks of the peace process so that a comprehensive settlement is achieved and the opportunities of stability and development in the region are boosted.

They also addressed bilateral relations and the need to bolster them in a way that will bring about good results for the two friendly peoples.

The meeting was attended by Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Hashmite Royal Court, and the Russian ambassador to Jordan.

Discusses Peace, Iraq With al-Kabariti

*JN0412130595 Amman Radio Jordan Network
in Arabic 1200 GMT 4 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti received Viktor Posuvalyuk, special envoy of the Russian president, who is currently touring the region.

Posuvalyuk conveyed a message to al-Kabariti from the Russian foreign minister. Talks dealt with the need to benefit from the positive atmosphere prevailing the region in order to continue and support the peace process. Talks also dealt with the subject of terrorism. The two sides agreed to fight terrorism regardless of its source, and stressed the need for international efforts to combat terrorism and denounce anyone practicing it, and to combat all quarters that sponsor and organize terrorism.

Talks also dealt with the international and regional situation, including the Barcelona conference and the situa-

tion in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They agreed to coordinate Jordanian-Russian efforts to support the peace agreement and peace process between the belligerent parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The two sides also discussed the situation in Iraq and the need to end the suffering of the Iraqi people caused by the siege imposed on them.

The meeting was attended by the Russian ambassador in Amman and the chief of the political desk at the Foreign Ministry.

King's Saudi Arabia Visit 'Definitely' Postponed

*JN0512065195 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 5 Dec 95
p 1*

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — AL-RA'Y — High-level sources told AL-RA'Y yesterday that because of the current health condition of His Majesty King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, it has definitely been decided to postpone His Majesty King Husayn's visit to Saudi Arabia.

The sources said that the visit, which had been scheduled to take place early this month, will be postponed until the health of the custodian of the two holy mosques improves.

Al-Kabariti's Meeting With Syria's al-Shar Detailed

*JN0412131595 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic
6 Dec 95 p 1*

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed sources have disclosed details about the successful meeting held recently between Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' on the sidelines of the Barcelona conference.

The sources said the two sides openly and frankly discussed the recent coolness in Syrian-Jordanian relations. AL-HADATH has learned that the Syrian foreign minister criticized the measures taken by the Jordanian customs authorities on the Syrian-Jordanian border, considering this a negative aspect in bilateral relations. Al-Kabariti told his Syrian counterpart that "these things happen. I can say they are ordinary things..."

The sources added that al-Kabariti pointed out that some Palestinian factions based in Syria commit security violations against Jordan. Al-Kabariti said this means that Syria tacitly approves this conduct. This is a far more serious issue than customs regulations.

For his part, al-Shar' said this information about the security violations is very serious, saying he had no knowledge of this. He promised to ask the concerned sides in Syria about this.

Al-Shar' told al-Kabariti that exceeding red lines in the Syrian-Jordanian relationship is prohibited, and that the security of Syria and Jordan is one. Anything other than this is unacceptable.

AL-HADATH has learned that the two sides have agreed to call a halt to media campaigns and to the many recent critical political statements. The two sides also agreed to continue meetings on the sidelines of Arab and international conferences in the near future to reinvigorate Syrian-Jordanian relations.

Editor Views 'Positive Signs From Damascus'

JN0312144895 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
3 Dec 95 pp 1, 28

["News Analysis" by political editor: "Positive Signs From Damascus"]

[FBIS Translated Text] If reports are true that Damascus wishes to ease its media campaigns against Jordan and that the Syrian political leadership has shown better understanding of the Jordanian position, then the Syrian process of political revision, which we talked about a few days ago, seems to include more topics than the negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track.

Information AL-DUSTUR publishes today on Foreign Minister al-Kabariti's meeting with his Syrian counterpart Faruq al-Shar' in Barcelona coincide with two other developments: The first is a Syrian effort, coordinated with Israel through the U.S. mediator, to subdue the Katyusha attacks in southern Lebanon, an action which met with the U.S. Administration's relief; and the second is the announcement on the release of about 1,000 political detainees who have been in Syrian jails for many years and the majority of whom are members of the banned Muslim Brotherhood.

These positive developments call for optimism and indicate that some of the region's states could possibly enter the Middle East peace era, with all the preliminary steps that are necessary for this step in terms of resuming inter-Arab peace and the domestic peace from the social and security viewpoints.

It is both unacceptable and illogical for Syria to continue media campaigns against some neighboring Arab sides, especially Jordan, at a time when Damascus is moving fast to realize peace with Israel and restore its just and legitimate rights of sovereignty over the Golan. The peace on the Jordanian-Israeli track has never been at the expense of any of the other tracks and the Jordanian leadership's backing and support to the Palestinian negotiators in Tabah can be repeated in Syria's interest provided that intentions are good and that the Amman-

Damascus channels of dialogue and communications are open.

Our peace with Israel, which is an important step and a basic cornerstone in a just and comprehensive peace in the region, will not be a burden to anybody but will rather form an element of support for efforts aimed at righting wrongs and restoring usurped rights and sovereignty in order to build a just and durable peace in the region.

That is how we have always viewed our role. We have always extended a helping hand to our brothers and it is time we bypass certain hard feelings in our inter-Arab relations to resume the building of a new Arab order which responds to the spirit of the age and its internal and external requirements.

Daily Expects Syria To End Anti-Jordan 'Campaign'

JN0312135795 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
3 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Hamdan al-Hajj]

[FBIS Translated Text] High-level sources at the Jordanian Foreign Ministry told AL-DUSTUR that the meeting between Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' on the sidelines of the Barcelona conference was fruitful and successful. The Syrians expressed an intention to calm down the situation, stop the media campaigns, and show further flexibility in this regard.

The same sources told AL-DUSTUR that during the meeting, the two ministers exchanged views regarding bilateral, regional, and international issues. Al-Kabariti explained Jordan's view vis-a-vis the peace process and the means to advance negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track, and the Syrian side showed greater understanding of the Jordanian position.

The sources said that last month's Barcelona meeting was a positive one in which Jordan was successful on various levels.

In another development, the sources said the Foreign Ministry is doing its best to secure the release of all Jordanian prisoners in Israel, indicating that there is a genuine Israeli desire to respond to the Jordanian request. A large number of prisoners, the sources added, will be released within the next few days as nothing serious prevents their release.

The sources pointed out that serious efforts are being made to restore normal relations with those Gulf states which have not yet normalized relations with Jordan, and that indications in this regard are very encouraging.

The sources, however, refused to comment on anything that has to do with Iraq or an Iraqi opposition meeting in Jordan.

'Source' Denies Order To Close Iraqi Companies

JN0412155595 Amman Radio Jordan Network
in Arabic 1500 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the Ministry of Industry and Trade dismissed reports published recently by some local newspapers claiming that the government asked owners of some Iraqi companies, or companies in which Iraqi shareholders invest, to liquidate their business and activities within a specific time period.

In a statement to the JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY, the source dismissed reports published by these newspapers to the effect that the ministry issued official memorandums warning these companies as well as the offices which organize export of goods to Iraq. The source described these reports as fabricated and groundless.

The source said the ministry has not taken any measures of any form or kind in this regard, noting that there are no Iraqi companies in Jordan as claimed by these newspapers. The fact is that there are Arab and foreign investors working in accordance with the Investment Encouragement Law, the source explained.

Daily Questions Ministry's Denial

JN0412144995 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic
6 Dec p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] A source of the Ministry of Industry and Trade denied that the ministry issued a decision ordering Iraqi firms operating in Jordan to liquidate their business during the period between 15 October and 15 December 1995.

Ghalib al-Dabbas, from the Companies Department in the ministry, said that report is no more than a rumor because it is illegal.

Al-Dabbas also denied that some Iraqi companies operating in Jordan are owned by Iraqi officials.

A department official told AL-HADATH that there are Iraqi companies operating in Jordan and owned by 'Udayy Saddam Husayn and 'Ali Hasan al-Majid. Where is the truth, O Ministry of Trade?

Government Bans London Paper's Dec Issue

JN0512093295 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic
5-11 Dec 95 p 2

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Press and Publication Department has banned the new December issue of

[the London-based] FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH and confiscated all copies destined for Jordan.

The new confiscated issue contains an article on the assassination of martyr Dr. Fathi al-Shaqqi and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. The issue also contains interviews with Dr. Ramadan Shalah, new secretary of the Islamic Jihad Movement; Abu-Musa [Sa'id Musa Muragha], secretary of the [dissident] Fatah movement; and Mrs. Fathiyah al-Shaqqi. [passage omitted]

It is worth recalling that FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH was also confiscated in December 1994.

Media Union Protests New Restrictions on Press

JN0512120195 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English
5 Dec 95 pp 1, 7

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani; "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Jordan Press Association (JPA) President Sulayman al-Qudah said on Monday [4 December] he planned to meet with the ministers of information and justice to protest against the government's proposed amendments to the Press and Publications Law.

The proposed amendments, which expands the government's powers to control the press, were drawn up by the Ministry of Information in line with comments made by His Majesty King Husayn voicing dissatisfaction at the role of the Jordanian media, both state-run and private-owned.

The proposed amendments empower the government the power to close down newspapers and demand that chief editors be serving members of the Jordanian Press Association (JPA) for at least seven years.

The amendments also impose an imprisonment of three months to three years for violators of the law.

"We are against the amendments in principle," Mr. al-Qudah said. "The current law has enough" restrictions.

The Press and Publications Law, enacted in May 1993, has been criticised by human rights organisations as restricting freedom of expression guaranteed in the Constitution and the National Charter Article 42 of the law prohibits publications from publishing among others, information that harms national unity. It also prohibits the publication of any material that degrade religion or sects or instigate crime or increase hatred and articles that insult the heads of state of Arab Muslim or friendly countries.

Samir al-Hiyari, president of the JPA's freedoms committee and member of the JPA board, said the board's

10 members unanimously decided to reject all proposed amendments.

If the government insisted on these changes, the JPA would launch an organized campaign through the press and the Lower House of Parliament to counter it, he said.

"We studied the amendments in full and we see an infringement on press freedoms and a setback to the gains made in comparison with the previous law," Mr. al-Hiyari said. "The proposed amendments are worse than martial law."

Although Mr. al-Hiyari agreed on the need to amend the current law, he said that any proposed amendments should be a step further in the democratic process in the country.

"We would request for a meeting with the prime minister or the King if need be," he added.

The JPA's board includes, in addition to the president, three editors representing daily newspapers, three members representing the Jordan News Agency, PETRA, and another three representing owners of publications. Mr. al-Hiyari said all the 10 voted unanimously against the amendments.

"The board had to adopt a firm decision," Mr. al-Hiyari said.

Since they started publication, weekly newspapers have been under scrutiny and criticism from the JPA itself. Last year, the JPA severely criticised three weekly newspaper for publishing "obscene photos and fabricated information."

This year, the Press and Publications Department at the Ministry of Information suspended two weeklies, HAWADITH AL-SA'AH and AL-BILAD, because their chief editors were not JPA members. The two weeklies took the case to court which ruled against the suspension.

MB Leader Assails 'Muzzling' of Press Freedoms

JN0512102195 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English
5 Dec 95 pp 12, 7

["Special to THE JORDAN TIMES" by Sa'idah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Muslim Brotherhood [MB] leader 'Abd-al-Majid Dhunaybat on Sunday [3 December] lashed out at what he described as the government's plans to curb press freedoms and declared that the movement would not participate in the government even if it were asked to. He also said that the movement would employ all peaceful means to counter

all efforts aimed at "muzzling" the press or "repressing" public liberties.

Mr. Dhunaybat's comments came amid reported government moves to tighten the Press and Publications Law and scale down the powers exercised by professional associations. His Majesty King Husayn has expressed dissatisfaction over the work of professional associations and the press in general. The King called on the "silent majority" to come out and express its support for peace and he instructed the government to ask the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution to rule on the legality of the powers exercised by the professional associations.

Following the King's speech, the government said it will introduce amendments to the Press and Publications Law. The amendments are expected to impose more restrictions on all publications.

"The government's attack not only violated the freedom of assembly within the associations and political parties that have been protected by the Constitution, but also the freedom of expression," Mr. Dhunaybat said at a press conference held at the Brotherhood's headquarters. "A new press and publications law that gives the executive authority the right to ban, suspend and close publications is now in the making."

The proposed amendments to the Press and Publications Law, as made known to the Jordan Times, are expected to empower the government to close down newspapers and demand that chief editors be serving members of the Jordan Press Association (JPA) for at least seven-years. The amendments also impose an imprisonment of three months to three years for violations of the law.

In addition, the amendments cancel a provision that sets the government's share in the equity of any newspaper at not more than 30 percent. The government now owns 61 per cent in the Jordan Press Foundation that publishes Al-Ra'y newspaper and 35 per cent in the Jordanian Company for Press and Publication that publishes Al-Dustur.

"In brief, what is happening is a reversal on democracy, a coup against the institutions and oppression on individuals," Mr. Dhunaybat asserted. In this atmosphere, "it is the whims and moods (of officials) and not laws and regulations that will rule."

According to Mr. Dhunaybat, Jordan is reneging on its commitment towards democracy and public freedoms.

"It is the political parties, professional associations, press, clubs and mosques that assume responsibility in" shaping policies, he said. "But the governments in our countries are going back to the ages of nationalisation."

Deploring violence and condemning terrorism, the Brotherhood leader insisted that the Brotherhood's ways would be peaceful.

In Egypt, "they adopted violent means after the failure of the democratic experiment. The ruling party usurped parliament seats to itself but the Muslim Brotherhood (in Egypt) did not employ violent means and they condemned violence."

Mr. Dhunaybat said he believed that the West was launching campaigns against Islam. "Violence exists everywhere...in Japan, in France, in Egypt, everywhere," he said. "It is not limited to Muslim countries."

Although he said that the Brotherhood was not asked to participate in future cabinet in Jordan and the issue was not discussed with the Brotherhood, Mr. Dhunaybat declared that the group would not participate even if it was asked to.

"Our general interest does not compel us to participate in the government for the time being," he said. "This stand is based on our principles."

Mr. Dhunaybat criticised the concept of confederation between Jordan and Palestinian entity.

"How can we forge a confederation between a country and people on a land over which they have no sovereignty?" he asked. "It is one form of liquidating the Palestinian issue."

He also criticised calls for a federation in Iraq and said these concepts were part of what he described as the Zionist scheme to divide the region.

Mr. Dhunaybat claimed that his criticism of the government's policies were not based on the failure of the Islamic Action Front in Saturday's elections to the Lower House of Parliament's Permanent Bureau.

The front, which insisted on nominating 'Abdallah al-'Akayilah for the House speakership, withdrew at last minute because of what observers believed as its limited chances to win the race. The IAF also lost the race to the post of deputy speaker and did not nominate any candidate for other posts.

"It is not because we failed in parliament that we are demonstrating our opposition," Mr. Dhunaybat said. "We have always fought for freedom of expression and freedom of the press within the general framework."

Mr. Dhunaybat insisted that freedom of the press should be in line with Islamic values and traditions.

"We will oppose any amendments through parliament, press and political parties," he said. "But we should not be giving the government any justification to press freedom of the press."

Mr. Dhunaybat referred to a case he filed against the weekly Al-Bilad newspaper two weeks ago for publishing a cartoon that "tarnished the image of Islam."

Asked if this action was in contradiction with the movement's claims in defence of press freedoms, Mr. Dhunaybat said "Freedom of expression does not mean infringement on the general ethics and morals."

VOL Cites Russian Envoy Comments on Peace Talks*NC0212151995 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic
1215 GMT 2 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] U.S. diplomatic efforts are resuming in the Middle East through Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the negotiations, who is scheduled to open talks with Syrian officials Monday [3 December] on ways to stimulate the peace process. Ross will also visit Israel for the same purpose.

The U.S. efforts coincide with a Russian move in the region conducted by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk. The Russian diplomat visited B'abda Palace, where he met President Ilyas al-Hirawi. He noted positive signs in the progress of the peace process in the region and Russian-U.S. coordination on the peace process. Our correspondent in B'abda Palace [Yazbik Wahbah] has the details.

[Begin recording] [Wahbah] Viktor Posuvalyuk, Russian deputy foreign minister for Middle Eastern affairs, said that we see positive and encouraging signs from the parties engaged in the peace process. After a meeting with President Ilyas al-Hirawi in B'abda in the presence of Russian Ambassador Gennadiy Ilichev he spoke about coordination and consultations with the U.S. side on the peace process. He expressed his country's readiness to help Arab countries militarily if they request it. Posuvalyuk conveyed Russian President Yeltsin's congratulations to President Ilyas al-Hirawi on the extension of his term in office. He emphasized the work to consolidate bilateral ties, namely in the economic sector.

Asked for his view of the peace process, he said:

[Posuvalyuk] My impressions are positive. There are important developments in the region that should be taken into consideration and utilized.

[Unidentified correspondent] What are these developments? Could Rabin's murder reflect positively on the peace process?

[Posuvalyuk] We are now talking about the positive signs we notice coming from the parties taking part in the peace process, which are encouraging.

[Correspondent] Is there coordination between you and [words indistinct]

[Posuvalyuk] We have coordination at the level of U.S. and Russian presidents. We have continuous coordination between our two ministers.

[Wahbah] The president of the Republic earlier spoke on the telephone with Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, amir

of the Riyadh region and brother of the Saudi King, to reassure himself about King Fahd's health. He was informed that the Saudi king's health was good. This is Yazbik Wahbah of the Voice of Lebanon at the Presidential Palace. [end recording]

[Announcer] We now go to Bustrus Palace [the Foreign Ministry], where the Russian diplomat began his visit to Lebanon with a meeting with Ambassador Zafir al-Hasan, secretary general of the Foreign Ministry. There, Posuvalyuk emphasized that the parties to the peace process have determined their option in favor of peace and noted new opportunities to activate the peace process. The details are with our correspondent at the Foreign Ministry [Jiran Kharrat].

[Begin recording] [Kharrat] Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk has noted that there are new developments and opportunities that must be used. He said he got the impression during his tour of the region that the parties engaged in the peace process have made a choice in favor of peace and to make the peace process a success. Posuvalyuk was speaking after talks with Ambassador Zafir al-Hasan, Foreign Ministry secretary general, at Bustrus Palace. He said the talks also dealt with bilateral ties which developed recently. He added that Russian Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Davydov will visit Lebanon early next year. He noted that the aim of his tour of the region is to form new ideas and learn about stands after the dramatic changes in the region. He denounced all forms of violence in the region and said that problems should be resolved peacefully and by implementing UN resolutions. He said:

[Posuvalyuk] In Russia, we regret all forms of violence in this region, which greatly distort the peace process. We say that the solution of these acute problems should be effected within the context of a comprehensive peaceful settlement on the basis of the known Security Council resolutions. In particular we should mention Resolution 425 and the (?condition) to preserve Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

[Kharrat] This is Jiran Kharrat at the Foreign Ministry. [end recording]

Buwayz Comments on Peace, Barcelona Conference*NC0312201395 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
1800 GMT 3 Dec 95*

[FEIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz returned to Beirut this afternoon after participating in the Barcelona Conference. He made a statement at the airport. He said:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Foreign Minister, you have returned to Beirut today after

leading the Lebanese delegation to the Barcelona Conference. How would you assess the results of the conference and its effect on the situation in Lebanon and the region?

[Buwayz] The Barcelona Conference dealt with political, economic, and cultural issues. It aimed to steer the dialogue between the EU countries and all the Mediterranean countries concerned with the dialogue. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] During the conference, we noticed a new tone in the indirect exchange between Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and his Israeli counterpart Baraq. In your view, to what extent could this indirect exchange influence the peace process in the region, the Syrian-Israeli dialogue and, consequently, the Israeli-Lebanese dialogue?

[Buwayz] The content of the exchange between Syria and Israel is not new, in the sense that Baraq's address to al-Shar' focused on a call for peace, which is not new. Former Prime Minister Shamir put forward these proposals at the Madrid Conference. These are general calls reiterated daily in newspapers and other media. Minister al-Shar's reply, which set forth the conditions for peace, is also not new. He only reiterated a well-known stance. Thus, we cannot say that this exchange is new in form and content. Both countries exchanged the same stance at the United Nations and during this conference. Perhaps there was a general psychological effect rather than legal and substantive content. Perhaps addressing one another by using each other's names was more of a psychological factor at this conference.

[Correspondent] We noticed that at the end of the Barcelona Conference U.S. and Russian diplomats made trips to the region. Dennis Ross will arrive in Damascus tomorrow and a Russian official visited Beirut yesterday or the day before. How would you explain these moves?

[Buwayz] After the assassination of Rabin, Peres put forward numerous proposals through the media. Some of these ideas suggested that he is determined to reach peace. He said that peace is more important than the elections, that he has not backed down on his proposal to achieve peace, and that Rabin's death will not affect the constants. These proposals are not supposed to remain media topics but should crystallize in practical proposals. During his visit to the United States Peres is expected to explain the proposals that are still unclear and not specific. In light of such proposals, we may be able to assess whether there are practical and positive developments. To sum up, I believe it is premature to rely on media proposals that do not contain practical ideas. It is better to wait and see if these endeavors will involve practical ideas to launch the peace talks anew.

[Correspondent] Uri Or today addressed threats to Syria and Lebanon, saying that Israel will embark on a certain operation in south Lebanon to stop Hizballah operations. What is your response as head of Lebanese diplomacy to these threats?

[Buwayz] I repeat that the deteriorating situation in the south is a result of the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory. The acts of resistance in the south are a reaction to the Israeli occupation. The resistance is not an issue, but a reaction to the occupation there. Despite all its forces, technology, expertise, and intelligence, Israel has, as yet, failed to establish security and stability in the south. It has been determined that the Israeli occupation of the south does not protect the Israeli border areas. I believe that Israel has lost more in the south than it has lost in all its wars against the Arab countries. These factors must make the Israelis realize that there is no solution to the deteriorating situation in the south unless they withdraw from this area.

[Correspondent] As the year draws to a close and the new one is drawing near, are you still optimistic that peace in the region is near?

[Buwayz] I believe that speculation about specific dates is not serious. I think that there are positive and promising factors for launching the negotiations, which stumbled during Rabin's term. Rabin did not want to complete the peace process before the Israeli elections. I believe that the next few weeks will show if the current proposals are serious. I believe that elaborating more on this issue would be speculation rather than serious assessment. [end recording]

Nasrallah on 'Resistance,' 'Terrorism'

NC0412205595 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic
27 Nov 95 p 4

[Interview with Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah by correspondents Ibrahim al-Amin, Nabil Haytham, and 'Imad Marmal; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [AL-SAFIR] After years of resistance, you still have this feeling of bitterness as a result of the state's indifference to the resistance and its political role. This means that there is a certain imbalance. Is this the result of the resistance's failure to inspire the regime or is it because the regime does not want to cross certain limits and move in its direction, such as celebrating resistance day for example?

[Nasrallah] I believe that the issue is basically one of the rulers' convictions. Official and popular political support for the resistance has developed very well over the past few years. The rulers' calculations might be

slightly different. The regime should supposedly have the people's interests utmost in its mind and give them priority over the American interests. I believe that many who speak about the resistance and think of it as a reality that embodies al-Jihad, sacrifice, loyalty, duty, and justice also think of Syria because it is a party that supports the resistance. At the same time, they have in their minds the Americans and the West which regard resistance as terrorism. These people take these stands into consideration due to their positions.

I believe that if any ruler puts aside these calculations and tries to be the son of this homeland and this people, then he will probably speak differently about the resistance. What we hear in private meetings is much more than we hear publicly. This means that some people have to weigh their statements that are carried by the media because certain parties will read them. They do not want these parties to question them about these statements, even though the Americans have considered the Lebanese Government and people responsible for the resistance following the al-'Ayshiyah and al-Qatransah operations. This issue has supposedly been resolved but some people appear to continue their efforts to minimize the authorities' responsibility toward the resistance. [passage omitted]

[AL-SAFIR] What about the network of agents recently discovered? How are you dealing with the problem of continued collaboration with Israel?

[Nasrallah] Most of the collaboration cases are old and are three, four, and seven years old. Some of them go back to 1978 and 1982. A person who gets involved in collaboration usually continues to do so unless there is a real deterrent to stop him. The situation inside the border strip is gradually improving and there are many cases of agents leaving the country. We, of course, have given them several choices. We have not made repenting and joining us a condition, but have given them open choices. We agree if the agents join, regardless of whether they want to repent. The important thing is that they should stop aiding and supporting the Israeli occupier.

In addition to leaving the country, there is the liquidation of some agents. There is a state of panic and terror, avoidance of compulsory recruitment, and mutinies that happen among the agents. As you have heard, the Bisri post was recently evacuated and the group moved to the Anan post, possibly because it is higher and better fortified. There are not enough soldiers to man these posts. The Israelis have retrieved most of the posts that were under control of the Lahd militia [South Lebanese Army]. This means that this militia is not capable of even filling the remaining posts under their control.

This is one of the most important achievements of the resistance. The Lahd militia has been dealt a blow.

As for the agents in the liberated areas, most of them are old. We recently succeeded in dismantling a large portion of their network, thus creating terror among the agents and limiting the chances of them being agents for Israel. We claim that we have so far dismantled important networks. As soon as a network member is arrested, the others regard themselves as identified and, therefore leave the country. This is good. We can now claim that the Israeli eyes in the liberated areas are not capable of working as effectively as they were one or two years ago. [passage omitted]

[AL-SAFIR] The West associated Hizballah with terrorism for a long time. It is noticed that this expression or charge has been dying for the last two years. It is also noticed that the Islamic forces in Arab and Islamic countries have begun to move toward violence. It is said that Hizballah stopped at this point, but has training individuals belonging to the aforementioned Islamic forces stopped?

[Nasrallah] This is purely an accusation. I firmly and categorically deny that Hizballah trains anyone, neither Egyptians, Algerians, nor any others. I would like to add that the Egyptians and Algerians do not need Hizballah to train them because some have already been trained in the armies of these countries, especially during national service. Also, many of them operated in Afghanistan, where the experience they gained is much greater than in Lebanon. They fought the Soviets there and received training in U.S. camps. I want to add that I know nothing about the extent of the Islamic affiliation or plan of the groups who commit certain acts of violence. If their plan is Islamic, I firmly say that some of these groups were trained by the Americans during the fighting in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. Any individual who spent 15 years in fighting and now has nothing to do can be recruited by any group which seeks to benefit from his experience in the current military and security actions.

[AL-SAFIR] What is your stance on the recent bombings in France?

[Nasrallah] We disapprove of them. They are unwarranted and do not serve the cause of the Algerian people, if they are meant to serve the Algerian people.

[AL-SAFIR] What about operations targeting Egyptians?

[Nasrallah] I cannot comment on this topic because indeed I am unaware of its circumstances or the nature of the current conflict between the Islamic groups and the Egyptians. I want to say that in the Egyptian and

Algerian models, emphasis is put on the victim and his mistakes while the killer is ignored. In the media, all that they see is the Islamists in Algeria and how they do wrong. I want to say that they do wrong and that the Egyptians do wrong. I cannot, for instance, understand why someone fires at a policeman organizing traffic on the streets and walks away. I do not say that this is right but that a great wrong is done. Thus, we talk of the victim and the victim's mistakes, but not the killer. On the contrary, a killer is protected and covered up and he is considered to be a proponent of human rights and democracy. Husni Mubarak is hailed throughout the world, however, should the Egyptian, who is the victim, make a mistake in his performance, furor would be raised and everyone would be talking about terrorism, violence and leveling charges that these groups are antiregime.

Let us exclude the al-Jihad groups and the Islamic groups and consider what happened recently in Egypt — the issue of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB]. The whole world knows that the MB is a trend that does not want to fight the regime and does not resort to military action. They are a quiet and peaceful group and explain their views peacefully. This is their reality in Egypt. Moreover, the Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group released strongly worded statements against the MB in Egypt and accused them of deviation, apostasy, and abandoning Islam and its dignity and so on and so forth. The Egyptian regime does not want to tolerate the MB taking part in the elections. The regime fabricated the story of the trial. Is the Egyptian regime dragging the MB leadership or base to resort to the option of the al-Jihad Organization and the Islamic Group? Let us consider the killer and not the victim. I believe that the root cause of the tribulation in Algeria is the Algerian regime and that the root cause of the problem in Egypt is the Egyptian regime. The responsibility for all that is happening in Algeria and Egypt must be primarily born by the Egyptian and Algerian regimes and secondarily by those who make mistakes in performance. The priorities are not well listed. Certain Islamic groups do wrong.

[AL-SAFIR] Do you see a link between the bombing of the U.S. facility in Riyadh and the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Pakistan?

[Nasrallah] This is something that requires information about the parties that carried out the bombing. It is not enough to know that three of four organizations here or there — and there could be some similarity in the names — have claimed responsibility for the bombing. Because I do not have accurate information, I cannot draw a link between them.

[AL-SAFIR] Not even from an analytical point of view?

[Nasrallah] I do not see any link between the two bombings. Pakistan's circumstances and the nature of the problem between the Egyptians and the Egyptian regime are different from the circumstances in "Hejaz" and the existing problem there, particularly between the Salafi trend [Muslims wishing to return to early Islamic practices] and the regime.

[AL-SAFIR] How do you assess the post-Rabin era, particularly since the new Israeli Government includes some symbols?

[Nasrallah] Rabin's assassination, in terms of its results, concern all the people, meaning that nobody can ignore the repercussions and impact of an event of such a magnitude. This is particularly so since we are in the heart of the battle. I believe, and others believe too, that of all the Arabs we are the people mostly concerned with what goes on inside the (Israeli) entity. On the Lebanese side, perhaps we are the party that follows up the most the Israeli affairs, transformations, and developments. This means that we give this issue priority on a constant basis. This, I believe, is what enabled [Hizballah-controlled] AL-MANAR television to make a scoop in reporting the assassination. Undoubtedly, Yitzhaq Rabin's death will have an impact of the settlement process. His death is not a casual event. To say that the negotiations will be accelerated or will slow down is a result of Rabin's murder. The negotiations will not follow the same pace. Contrary to what the leaked reports I have read about our meeting with Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri, we did not infer that there would be a major acceleration of the settlement process. We believe that this process will more likely be loaded with mines and dangers more than before. This is what we said immediately after Rabin's murder. He who reads Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq's remarks will realize that those who speak of acceleration must reconsider their opinion. Baraq is not just a foreign minister. A foreign minister is supposed to speak in diplomatic language. These remarks were his first act of diplomacy to the world. He also belongs to the military establishment and he succeeds Rabin in the hawks' wing within the Labor Party.

I want to say something. Any party that no longer has a strong and firm leadership and that comes under much pressure cannot proceed with the same pace it did when it had an able leader. Undoubtedly, Shim'on Peres is not as able a leader of the Labor Party as Rabin was. In the coming elections, the head of the Israeli Government will be directly elected. There is no doubt that Peres is not as popular a leader as Rabin was. These are clear points of weakness. Inside the Labor Party today

there are some positions of power that will emerge and consolidate, such as Baraq and Hayim Ramon, who rejoined the party. We know, judging by our follow-up, that there was very acute and harsh polarization around Rabin and Peres. Rabin's death will not easily eliminate the two wings and turn the Labor Party into a single wing.

One of the striking observations which one could ponder is that Peres has not resorted to early elections to benefit from the Jewish sympathy for the Labor Party over Rabin's death. The Israeli right wing is not something insignificant. The Labor Party under Rabin was getting along with a vote or two, with the help of the Arab deputies. The extremist right-wing is not insignificant. The extremist religious groups, the rabbis, etc., have a major influence, even within the military establishment and the security agencies. Proof of this is that the group that carried out the assassination turned out to be working with the Israeli intelligence and the "Shin Bet," and this shows the influence of the extremist groups.

The Jewish path is in a state of acute contradiction; some want peace at any price because they are tired of wars, while others, from a Biblical point of view, say that this is not the best time to make peace, as Rabin and Peres believe, but the best time for expansion. This is because the Arabs are extremely weak and they will never be weaker than they are today. These people want to establish a Greater Israel and to dictate their terms to the Arabs. They say that if Syria resists, let us make war against it, change the regime, and impose our will on it. Advocates of this current are not few either.

There is something else. Besides his enthusiasm for peace as he calls it, Peres remains a man, just like any other man who feels that he is the target of a death threat. This threat to kill him is present in his mind with every political decision he makes and in every word and every speech he utters. If this applies to any normal person, imagine how it would apply to a Jew because it is known that the Jews more than other people fear death because of their psychological makeup. Hence we do not believe that matters will move with the speed being spoken of. They could move with the same tempo as under Rabin, propelled by his blood or they could even move at a slower speed.

I refer here to one of the signs of anxiety over the settlement process after Rabin's death. By this I mean this huge gathering in Jerusalem (on the day of Rabin's funeral). These people did not come to attend the funeral, but to tell the world and the circles lying in wait for the settlement process that Rabin had gone but the whole world is behind the settlement process. If the Americans have had confidence in Peres' position, the

Labor Party's position, the structure within the Labor Party, and the Jewish structure, then they would not have needed this huge gathering and the personal efforts of (U.S. President Bill) Clinton.

[AL-SAFIR] How do you see the future of the Islamic movement and how is it now? Has this movement succeeded in becoming an alternative to Arabism?

[Nasrallah] We should separate two things: The current Islamic awakening which is getting stronger and spreading and the level of some Islamic movements' performance and their utilization of this Islamic awakening.

In my view, there is no going back on the Islamic awakening regardless of what has happened because this is not a political or party plan, that is, we cannot hit the whole concept of awakening if we hit an organization, a party, or a group.

I believe that there is a problem in the performance of the Islamic groups and movement. This problem has not reached the stage of despair. Iran's experience was a splendid one. Why? Because there was a single leadership in Iran. There was the imam who formed the historic leadership that rallied the people behind it, removed the shah, fought for eight years, and established a stable regime. Afghanistan's historic problem is one of leadership. There is not a single leader to unite behind. The problems in the Islamic arenas are the result of the absence of a united leadership and a united plan.

There is another problem, namely that some Islamists have entered the struggle arena prematurely and burned their bridges, therefore they quickly entered into a struggle with the regime or were pushed into this struggle and forced to burn all their bridges at a time when they should have delayed this struggle until later. This is also because of the leadership problem.

There is also the problem of priorities. If I am for example in Egypt and have the capability, then I will not be fighting the police or acting militarily against the regime but trying to open up the borders with Palestine. I will be trying to confront the Israelis and the Israeli influence inside Egypt and trying to rearrange my priorities.

We in Hizballah try through our contacts with many leaders of the Islamic movements to discuss these issues with them. We discuss the issue of cooperation between the Islamists and their openness to the pan-Arabists and nationalists. Some Islamic movement circles, or thought to be part of the Islamic movement, are for example undertaking studies that are heretical. Some Islamic movements are accusing each other of heresy. The fact is that some of this is the result of ignorance, misery, and stubbornness. The intelligence services is another

reason. When the Americans want to confront the Islamic movement and awakening, they do so through other Islamic movements, symbols, persons, ulemas, and groups that damage this awakening through their performance, language, and actions.

[AL-SAFIR] For example?

[Nasrallah] It is better not to name names.

[AL-SAFIR] Better for whom?

[Nasrallah] (laughing) For us and for you, better for the general climate. We have not despaired of this world. I believe that exerting efforts in this direction will bear fruit.

[AL-SAFIR] Going back to Rabin's assassination, you noted that it might speed up or slow down the negotiations. What will the resistance position be after peace should the negotiations lead to peace?

[Nasrallah] The answer to this question is known. Let us not anticipate things.

[AL-SAFIR] If Lebanon signs a peace agreement, will you regard this as treason?

[Nasrallah] (laughing) God willing, they will not sign. Let us also not anticipate things. Then we will see.

Judge Orders Inquiry Into Plot Against Dissident

NC0212160895 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
1500 GMT 2 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Judge Jamil Bayram, the public appeals prosecutor in the south, today instructed the head of the Sidon Gendarmerie Company and the public security unit in the south to conduct investigations to verify the authenticity of information revealed at a news conference Palestinian official Munir al-Maqdah [a dissident Fatah member] held in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah Camp yesterday.

At the news conference, al-Maqdah brought forward Palestinian Rawhi Muhammad Abu-Yusuf, who said he had received instructions to assassinate al-Maqdah during the Friday prayers.

Judge Bayram asked that he be consulted on detention or any other measures.

Extradition of Church Bombing Suspect Sought

NC0412170595 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
1630 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sweden has notified Lebanon of the arrest of Rafiq Fu'ad al-Fahl, former member of the disbanded Lebanese Forces militia, who is charged with taking part in the assault on the Sayyidat al-Najat Church in February 1994.

Judge 'Adnan 'Addun, prosecutor general in the Court of Cession, handed the Lebanese Ministry of Justice the extradition file which will be conveyed to the Swedish authorities to secure the defendant's extradition and bring him to trial in Beirut.

Muslim Scholars Protest Ban on Head Scarf in Schools

NC0512072295 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic
27 Nov 95 p 9

[FBIS Translated Text] At its periodic meeting, the Muslim Scholars group discussed the ban that some schools in Beirut and other areas have imposed on wearing head scarfs [hijab] by religious female students. Scholar [Muhammad Husayn] Fadlallah referred to this issue in his Friday sermon.

A statement issued by the group said: After discussing this subject with His Eminence [Fadlallah], it was learned that some cases do exist. This makes us wonder whether some schools are seeking to provoke a sectarian strife that will negate all Lebanon's domestic achievements. The hijab is not just a fad of Muslim women; it is a religious commitment and cannot be banned under any circumstances. These schools must understand that Lebanon is not France and that Muslims are a mainstay of this country; their feelings, rules, and rites cannot be disregarded, therefore, these schools must reverse their decision, which we will not take lightly. We will discuss this issue with all the relevant authorities before taking necessary measures against it. We urge parents whose daughters are being subjected to this harassment to refer the matter to our group, which will deal with it in the appropriate manner.

Phalangist Notables on Internal Strife

95AA0287A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic
19 Aug 95 pp 38-41

[Report on interviews with Phalangist Party Chairman Dr. George Sa'adah and former Minister Joseph al-Hashim by Samir Mansur; places and dates of interviews not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut — When I called Phalangist Party Chairman Dr. George Sa'adah to inquire about the truth of what his adversaries say about him, he interrupted me to say: "And many they are."

When I contacted former Minister Joseph al-Hashim after the decision to expel him from the party was issued to inquire about what was going on in the Phalangist Party, he hastened to say: "And is there a Phalangist Party about which to speak? This party no longer exists!"

For years, the Phalangist Party has been experiencing a series of crises summed up by Munir al-Hajj, the party deputy chairman, as a problem between the party's poor and rich. Al-Hajj has said, "We, the current leadership, are the poor. The others, including the Lebanese Forces, ex-President Amin al-Jumayyil, and some of his supporters are the rich." Describing the current leadership's condition, al-Hajj has said it is like someone engraving into rock whereas the others "scoop out of an ocean," noting that the "engraving is what will last."

The Phalangist Party, which has produced two presidents of the republic—even though some people raise more than one question about Bashir al-Jumayyil's assumption of the presidency during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and even though they consider assumption of the presidency by Amin, Bashir's brother, an accident and an inheritance — is in an unenviable position today despite its chairman's endeavors to practice a policy of openness and moderation, coupled with eagerness for strong relations with the Syrian leadership.

The words al-Hashim uttered on the television program entitled "His Excellency the President," produced by colleague Jubran Tuwayni, were tantamount to the straw that broke the camel's back. He was expelled from the party after he described its chairman as the "signboard president."

The conflict within the Phalangist Party thus surfaced more openly than ever before, keeping in mind that it is not confined to al-Hashim alone.

We interviewed both al-Hashim and Party Chairman George Sa'adah after the decision to expel al-Hashim.

Party and Constitution

[Mansur] The first question to Phalangist Party Chairman Dr. Sa'adah was: Where is your party heading?

[Sa'adah] The Phalangists are heading where they should be heading. Everybody knows that I have refused to deal with fabricated issues through the media, no matter what kind they are, however, the media have been used against the party by those who have an objection, as they allege. The media themselves have also gone too far in their analyses that are totally detached from the reality in which the Phalangist Party lives.

[Mansur] There is talk of mass resignations from the Phalangist Party under the umbrella of your chairmanship.

[Sa'adah] To date, nobody has resigned from the Phalangist Party, not individually and not en masse. The

party has a constitution which governs its management and in accordance with which resolutions are issued. I find it logical that when a resolution is adopted, party followers have to either abide by it or resign. I find this to be axiomatic in party life.

It is impossible for followers to remain in the party and to violate its resolutions. If the leadership turned a blind eye to such violations in the past, then this party leadership has decided unanimously that there can be no deviation from party discipline.

[Mansur] Why hasn't the Phalangist Party been able throughout the years to go beyond its Christian and Maronite identity specifically and into the broader homeland?

[Sa'adah] This is a false accusation against the Phalangist Party, which is called the Lebanese Phalangist Party and not the Christian or Maronite Phalangist Party. In the party laws, there is no provision that indicates in any way whatsoever that the party has a sectarian or denominational character. Fractically, Phalangist ranks include members from all sects, by different percentages, of course. To this hour, there are still elements in the party ranks from all sects despite all the developments that Lebanon has experienced and that have been sectarian in character at times. Those who don't want the party to be in the national line promote the accusation that the Phalangist Party is sectarian or denominational. Whenever we have adopted a national resolution, we have seen such a resolution confronted by those who are supposed to welcome it. The best proof is what is happening in the party these days.

[Mansur] Do you feel that there is a problem within the Phalanges?

[Sa'adah] There is a problem, of course and we must not cover our eyes and disregard its presence, but for totally different reasons than what is rumored. It is said, for example, that there is a democratic crisis. This is not to brag but the fact is that the party's entire Electoral Council and the majority of the Political Bureau were appointed for life in the past. Former deputies were life members of the Political Bureau. When I took over the party chairmanship in 1986, the constitution was amended for the first time and all these aspects were changed. Thus, all Political Bureau members are elected now. Advisers for life exist no longer and party deputies are Political Bureau members only while they occupy their parliamentary seats. For the first time in the party's history, the Electoral Council consists of precinct, district, and province chairmen, all of whom are elected by the base directly. This council elects the party chairman, the Political Bureau members, and the party deputy chairman. The latest elections — about

which a lot of rumors were spread, the least of which was not the rumor of a boycott by district and province chairmen, and I don't know who else — were held in a democratic climate, and only five out of a total of 96 individuals entitled to elect were absent from them.

[Mansur] Do you have an accurate count of the members of the party's General Assembly?

[Sa'adah] Of course. We get our statistics from those who have replaced their party cards — and they total more than 23,000 members — but there are also reserved rights because when we set a deadline for the replacement of cards, we preserved the rights of those who could not replace their cards for security or political reasons. We have also reserved the rights of Phalangists who are spread throughout the world. To us, these people are still Phalangists, and they should replace their cards when circumstances permit it.

[Mansur] There is a feeling that most parties, especially in the Third World — excluding internationally recognized ideological parties — are tied to the person. What I mean is: To what degree has the absence of al-Jumayyil clan affected your party's makeup?

[Sa'adah] True, but we must make a distinction between Pierre al-Jumayyil as a founder and al-Jumayyil clan because party leadership is not hereditary. More than one member of al-Jumayyil clan may become party chairman, not just because he is a relative of Pierre al-Jumayyil's but because he possesses the qualities that make him eligible to lead the party. What you have noted is largely true. I became aware of this fact as of the first moments in which I became party chairman. I declared my motto as soon as I was elected, and it is the motto of working to transform the party "from the power of the founder to the power of the institution." This is why we proceeded to establish "party institutions." Thus, all Political Bureau members became elected members. We appointed the Advisory Committee and we organized the General Secretariat. We must acknowledge that the motto I released has not been completely accomplished for a variety of reasons, not just because Pierre al-Jumayyil departed but also because some people sought to exploit his departure, as well as this motto. Moreover, democratic life in the third world has not crystallized yet. In democratic regimes, the winner must not get giddy with his win and the loser must learn how to endure the loss. Here, he who loses blames somebody else, like a student who blames the examination committee for his failure. He who wins says at times: Praised be Him Who put me in control of people's lives. We have sought and we continue to seek to give democracy its modern meaning. This may take some time, but we will persist.

[Mansur] How are your relations today with the dissolved Lebanese Forces Party, especially in light of the sentence issued against Samir Ja'ja', its chairman?

[Sa'adah] The Lebanese Forces did not engage in their action as a party. Dr. Ja'ja' ran in 1992 for election as Phalangist Party chairman in a campaign that everybody remembers, but there was dual loyalty on the part of some individuals at the time. So the Political Bureau adopted a resolution to the effect that there could be no dual loyalty in the Phalangist Party; that whoever wishes to return to the party from the forces had a reserved place; and that whoever wished to stay with the forces had to resign from the party. We formed a committee for the purpose at the time.

[Mansur] Your adversaries talk about party possessions and property sold here and there. What is the truth?

[Sa'adah] We have concealed absolutely nothing. The party has a Finance Committee that is comprised of the party chairman, the deputy chairman, the general secretary, the council chairman, and a number of individuals. This committee enjoys absolute powers for a specific term that is renewed by the Political Bureau. What has been sold was some property near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in al-Ashrafiyah at the end of 1992. Despite its powers, the Finance Committee declared repeatedly before a plenary session of the Central Council and the Political Bureau that the party was about to sell this property and it invited any of those present, and any of their friends, to make an offer if they were interested in the property. Subsequently, a number of offers were made and the property was sold. Everybody knows that the clamor about this property was not raised until the recent party elections. The party secured its budget through the sale of that property because contrary to the impression of some people who believed that the party had piles of money, our coffers did not have enough to finance the ordinary budget. They talk about the sale of one property but not about the properties that the party has purchased in al-Ashrafiyah, Junyah, Kafr 'Ubayda, and in other places as a result of the sale of this property. Anyway, despite the powers of the Finance Committee and even though it is not subject to any control, I insisted for the first time in the party's history that the this committee submit to the plenary session and before everybody a statement of account showing revenues and expenditures for the past two years.

I declared all financial records open for a set period of time for any Phalangist or non-Phalangist wishing to peruse them. At the end of the meeting and after the financial report was examined, the Central Council and the Political Bureau approved the report unanimously

by a show of hands. I don't know why this issue is raised. Pierre al-Jumayyil used to say that what hurts a man most is to be compelled to defend himself against false accusations. This is what pains us today.

Party No Longer Exists

[Mansur] On the other hand, the first question addressed to former minister Joseph al-Hashim was: What is happening in the Phalangist Party?

[Hashim] What is happening in the Phalangist Party now is a result of a number of practices that certainly fail to comply with acknowledged party behavior. This condition started when Dr. George Sa'adah took over party chairmanship in 1986. It is well-known that he gained this chairmanship with open support from Dr. Samir Ja'ja'. Dr. Sa'adah enlisted the support of the Lebanese Forces at the time to attain the chairmanship, else he would not have attained it. Dr. Ja'ja' fought a hard battle to lead Dr. Sa'adah to the chairmanship. It has become evident from practice that Dr. Sa'adah has been trying to entrench himself in the chairmanship term after term.

Here, I would like to note that I "divorced the party three times" eight years ago and declared this in more than one information medium. I am astonished at how the current party leadership exploited the recent television program to announce my so-called expulsion when I had already expelled myself from this leadership and this party, and I announced this publicly! Conditions got even worse during the latest term which was accompanied by the ouster of a certain faction of Phalangists and by the creation of controversies and conflicts between one Phalangist faction and another. Matters reached such a point that a small band of Dr. Sa'adah's close associates monopolized all of the party's political and other spoils and the largest degree of power and influence in the party. Others, regardless of their party positions and status, were marginalized. Whenever a party figure gained prominence in a certain area, one felt that there was a premeditated plan to embarrass and oust him. If I listed those who abandoned the Phalangist Party or gave up party action in successive droves during Dr. Sa'adah's chairmanship, you would find that the number of notables and figures who have departed equals the number of the entire Phalangist Party base. What I mean is that Phalangists numbered nearly 75,000 before Dr. Sa'adah became chairman whereas the number of registered Phalangists is no more than 6,000 members now, of whom only 500 support Dr. Sa'adah. You will find now how Phalangist Party base members will declare their abandonment of this leadership from time to time.

[Mansur] Such words draw question marks about the Phalangist Party's future. Where is this party heading?

[Hashim] I imagine that the Phalangist Party exists no longer, thanks to its current leadership which has swerved from the party line. This does not mean that the Phalangist Party was moved yesterday along the lines of an option that contrasts with today's current option, as this leadership alleges in reports it spreads. These reports allege that the party moved with an Israeli option and is now moving with a different option. No. We beg them to permit us to correct this information. During the recent war, there were two tendencies within the party. One was an Arab tendency in which I figured prominently, declaring my positions in this tendency and advocating the Arab option — through the Syrian gate and by way of distinguished relations between Lebanon and Syria — versus the Israeli option. Meanwhile, those who are now using the positions of influence to gain spoils and benefits proceeded with other well-known and suspect tendencies.

[Mansur] Since he assumed the Phalangist Party chairmanship, Dr. Sa'adah has been talking about the founder and the institution. Do you think that the founder's departure has caused the party to buckle and collapse?

[Hashim] The talk about founder and institution is not serious. In the founder's era, there was a party. In this phase, which is called the institution era at times, action is dictatorial and there is a war of cancellation. The current Phalangist leadership embraces a militia-type mentality in its actions. It is engaged in a war of canceling and ousting Phalangists so it will monopolize for itself and for a small band of close associates the party's spoils and resources and its political gains, if any exist.

[Mansur] Are we approaching a new uprising within the Phalangist Party?

[Hashim] The uprising has taken place. There is a large group of so-called "old guard" who have taken numerous stances in recent years. This guard includes Dr. Iliya Karamah, Dr. Antoine Mu'arbis, Antoine Jazar, Charles Dahdah, and Dr. Ibrahim Najjar. It is an isolated and detached group. There is also the Khalil Nadir, Pussy Ashqar, Joe Iddih, Fu'ad Abu-Nadir, Pierre Sayigh, and Ilham Rizq group. This group has broken away from the Phalangist Party. There is a new group that has formed the opposition to the new leadership and that includes, for example, Elie Qardahi, al-Shuf Region chairman; Michel Jabbur, al-Ashrafiyah Region chairman; Joe Himsi, al-Sayfi Region chairman; Paul al-Jumayyil, al-Matn Region chairman; and Tannus Qardahi, Jubayl Region chairman. These men are chairmen

of regions and of popular bases who have, to a degree, declared their opposition to this leadership and their breaking away from it. There is then the overwhelming majority of Phalangists, from whom I receive complaints every now and then and who have become ashamed of declaring their party identity in some gatherings and on some occasions for fear that others will revile them. Under this leadership, affiliation with the Phalangist Party has reached the point where one is ashamed to declare it.

[Mansur] Is all this just because of this leadership, in your opinion?

[Hashim] Yes, I think so. Basically, all parties with a sectarian or confessional structure have suffered a little setback, however, there are parties whose structure continues to be sectarian and confessional and which still hold a certain political position, thanks to their leaders. (Here, al-Hashim cited the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, Amal Movement, and Hizballah as examples, noting that they are sectarian and confessional in character but that they have, nevertheless, continued to hold their political positions, thanks to their leaders.)

[Mansur] Some leaders of the Phalangist Party leaders liked to call it a nationalist party. Why hasn't this party been able to surpass its Christian, specifically Maronite, character?

[Hashim] This is true, but not to such a degree. If you wish, parties arose amidst certain tendencies, depending on the time in which they arose during formation of the first republic. The Najjadah Party and the Phalangist Party, not to say the Constitutional Party and the National Bloc Party, came into existence. So, there were parties that dealt with the diplomatic affair through the general political climate prevailing in the country. In the diffusion phase, the Phalangist Party had centers among non-Maronites and it had in the south, Iqlim al-Kharrub, and al-Shuf extensions which nearly transformed it into a semi-national party. But the war factors began to reflect negatively on the structure of parties, leading them to conditions similar to their current conditions. Under such conditions and narrow practices, no party can be destined to succeed. In wake of the harsh lesson they have learned from the war, the Lebanese people are not eager to join sectarian parties, as evidenced by the fact that we see nobody joining such parties, unless those who join to reap confidential benefits from their affiliation.

[Mansur] To what degree has the departure of al-Jumayyil clan affected the Phalangist Party and what is the extent of the influence of former President Amin al-Jumayyil on the party now?

[Hashim] Frankly, Lebanese parties rose and grew according to the character and qualities of their leaders. If the Progressive Socialist Party were not headed by Walid Junblatt currently, this party's position would be different. As for the Phalangist Party, Dr. Sa'adah can be a one-term chairman in the absence of Pierre or al-Jumayyil or Amin al-Jumayyil, but he cannot be the founder. He has obtained special powers so he will be the sole ruler. One thing that Pierre al-Jumayyil was unable to obtain was special powers. Dr. Sa'adah has appointed the Electoral Committee so it would elect him and appointed the Political Bureau so it would give him the decision-making power.

Yes, if Amin al-Jumayyil were the chairman, this party would have greater importance, credibility, and influence, not because Amin is the best and most important but because one needs a leader ultimately. In the Third World, and particularly here in Lebanon, the person constitutes a program in the absence of strategies. It is the person, not the dogma, as proven by the fact that the Phalangist Party has no dogma and is not an ideological party.

[Mansur] Is it possible to restore the Phalangist Party, considering its current condition?

[Hashim] Yes, when this leadership departs and when the party's ousted leaders and notables return. Let them stop planting some slogans in the minds of some people. It is not true that without Sa'adah, the party will become Israeli.

[Mansur] To whom does the party property belong?

[Hashim] It belongs to the Phalangist Party. Regrettably, there is a piece of land that has aroused great clamor and was tantamount to the straw that broke the camel's back. This is the land located in al-Ashrafiyah Region, close to the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that was sold for \$2.2 million without the knowledge of the party's Political Bureau. A bureau member who is close to Dr. Sa'adah has personally told me that he (meaning Sa'adah) denied the land sale and didn't disclose it until six months later. A lawsuit will be filed against the party leadership in this connection. The party also has the Voice of Lebanon Radio, which we founded and which includes property and equipment valued at \$10-\$12 million. There is also the Antilyas Cooperative. They say it has lost \$1 million.

Al-Jumayyil: Phalangist Position Is not Harmless and Is Connected With Country's Conditions

AL-MAJALLAH asked former President Amin al-Jumayyil for his opinion on the conflict within the Phalangist Party. Responding, he said:

"What is happening now within the Phalanges is a real tragedy resulting from aimlessness at the top level; from disavowal of the creed and program of Pierre al-Jumayyil, the founding chairman; from fragmentation at the base level; and from marginalization of the party's role in the Lebanese arena. This Phalangist absence is a great loss for Lebanon because the party has always been an influential national bridge in the country's political balance and national unity. It is not accidental that this worsening party condition coincides with the sweeping climate of frustration from which everybody complains. The Phalangist absence makes one faction of the people feel that it is powerless and excluded from any role. Consequently, the country lacks the necessary political and national balance, without which the people do not feel reassured and the country does not feel stable.

"Moreover, this worsening condition is not harmless. It is connected with the country's general conditions, under which patriotic positions are prohibited. The leaders and will of all the national institutions capable of defending the country's interest have been seized."

Al-Jumayyil also said that his concern is to help rescue the Phalanges because this constitutes a contribution to rescuing Lebanon.

Maronite Patriarch Sufayr Interviewed

95AA0287B Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 14 Aug 95
pp 3-4

[Report on interview with Patriarch Sufayr by Carol Daghir, George Bkasini, and Khudr Talib in al-Diman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The car left the public road and moved slowly to the little hill that leads to al-Diman.

Under the shade of the cedar, larch, and tannub [as transliterated] trees, which offer protection against the summer heat, the Maronite Patriarchate Headquarters sits on the shoulder of the sacred Qadisha Valley, pondering a deep-rooted past and a future abounding with question marks.

Calm envelops the lofty building in the tranquillity of the afternoon. Visitors to Patriarch Cardinal Nasrallah Butrus Sufayr, the master of al-Diman, included some inhabitants of the neighboring villages who had come for some official business. As for influential visitors concerned with a higher political interest, they have a thousand apprehensions about their visit. Some stay away and some saunter into the place after sunset and far from the eyes of television cameras and the curiosity of the media. Some head for the patriarchate to plant their feet firmly in a political arena that

very much resembles quicksand. Some come seeking political cover or support for their position and status, making sure that photographers and journalists are present. Some still come for consultation and to seek guidance from the patriarch's directions.

Since the last presidential election, the quality of activity around and inside the Maronite Patriarchate has changed. August 1988: The heir to Mar Yuhanna Marun [Saint John Maron] was then at the center of the consultations aimed at selecting Maronite presidential candidates; lists approved by Bkirki transmitted by U.S. diplomats and carried by intermediaries between Beirut and Damascus, and then "things happened," according to the patriarch who said it with a willing smile.

August 1995: Your beatitude, why haven't the Americans visited you for nearly six or seven months?

"I don't know. Ask them," he answers, raising his hands. He then "muses" and the furrows on his brow deepen, as if he is searching for the answer deep in his soul. Or perhaps the answer imposes itself and causes him concern.

With 1.5 months left for the start of the constitutional grace period for the presidential elections, AL-SAFIR headed for al-Diman in an endeavor to get a stock account of the second republic from the time it was founded to the present. It headed there to observe the expectations and hopes for the coming phase, especially since Cardinal Nasrallah Sufayr has continued to preach, appeal, warn, and denounce throughout al-Ta'if era, or the era of President Ilyas al-Hirawi's administration. The cardinal has been doing it in the name of the "wronged," the "frustrated," and those "excluded" from participation in the government, and "they belong to all sects, not just to one faction of the Lebanese."

Patriarch Sufayr explicitly states his positions on the country's developments through the sermons he delivers at Sunday mass and through the statements issued by the Council of Bishops. Beyond these two frameworks, he embarks on political issues very deliberately, carefully, and cautiously, refusing to take a final and decisive stance on the events "because we are talking of principles," as he explained to us. This is why he avoided evaluating President al-Hirawi's administration, contenting himself with pointing out that "we said what had to be said at the time."

But on the presidential issue, the patriarch does not conceal his opposition to extension or renewal. He calls for respect for the constitution; implementation of the national charter approved in al-Ta'if; and sound elections. He denies that the Harisa meeting flows in the direction of an extension. Asserting that he clings to his

position, he said, "We have not changed our position. We are opposed to amendment of the constitution." The patriarch noted that all historical facts indicate that "all those who extended or renewed evidently failed."

The patriarch also expresses reservation on "assumption of power by the military," making a distinction between the role of the military and the role of politicians in a democratic system "but some people talk about men such as Charles de Gaulle and U.S. President Eisenhower and say that they succeeded. How would I know..?"

He also urges the need for the presence of an "honest, firm, capable, and patriotic leader" at the head of the state so he will set matters aright. Perhaps the interesting position is the patriarch's refusal to answer a question connected with Syria or to express any opinion in this regard. When asked about the various mediation efforts initiated by some politicians and deputies, the patriarch was content to say, "Ask them."

Patriarch Sufayr justifies the opposition to the 1992 election and calls for participation in the coming elections but "under conditions that enable the people to cast their vote." He believes that one requirement for participation is an election law which reflects the people's opinion soundly. The patriarch reviewed some projected ideas, saying "no to forgery" and alluding to an election card that could obstruct forgery.

The patriarch poses before the idea that each voter select one candidate in accordance with the principle of one vote for one candidate. He expresses reservation on the so-called single electoral constituency because the "citizen does not know who he is electing." Moreover, a single constituency presumes the presence of political parties and blocs and election platforms and it calls for enacting democracy through municipal elections and through the application of administrative decentralization.

He believes that al-Ta'if agreement has not been implemented and wonders, "Where is the constitutional council," for example?

On the Samir Ja'ja' issue, the patriarch wonders why everybody has singled out Samir Ja'ja' "whereas others have done what he has done, and more?"

He also wondered what happened to the file of al-Dhuq church, noting that he is not casting doubt on the judiciary but just expressing the belief that files are not opened accidentally.

In his evaluation of the opposition's role, the patriarch believes that the "opposition is as disunited as the people in power" and that frustration and injustice are touching

all Lebanese, not just Christians. The proof is the Beirut by-election, in which 96 percent of the people did not participate. "Are they Maronites? This means that all citizens from all sects resent the situation."

When asked for his opinion of the need for the presence of Prime Minister al-Hariri in order to maintain financial stability, he was content to say, "Some people say that his presence is necessary for a stable economic situation."

Regarding the naturalization issue, Patriarch Sufayr believes that the manner in which naturalization has been done changes the country's demographic, political, and sectarian features and may be intended to prepare the way for resettlement because those naturalized are, according to what has become evident, one-third Christian and two-thirds Muslim. In other countries, a person is thoroughly investigated and his knowledge of the country's history and laws and other aspects is tested before he is granted citizenship. He added, "In Lebanon, similar numbers have never been naturalized before. Ordinarily, the president naturalized no more than 10 or 15 individuals at the end of his term."

Patriarch Sufayr says that "politics are for politicians. However, clergymen may express their opinions under some circumstances that require providing guidance to people. This is their right. If they don't do it, then they are lacking."

He adds that people await such guidance because there are religious principles that are compatible with secular affairs. In this regard, "There is a difference between us and Islam, which is church and state whereas with us, church and state are separate. This does not mean, however, that religious guidance should be barred."

He added that if one seeks to denounce violence and to lead people against it, then this is not politics.

Cardinal Sufayr suddenly shifts to the more important issue, saying, "There is talk now about extending the president's term. We say that there is a constitution that must be observed. If it is not observed and if there are pressures and necessitating reasons, then the country will be harmed."

The cardinal wonders, "Would it be said that a clergyman is intervening in politics if he warns of such harm? Should he stay in his church and turn dumb? People come and ask questions, and it is the clergyman's duty to speak up."

Getting specific, he says, "A clergyman must not, of course, get involved in petty political affairs, such as urging that this man be employed and not that one and saying 'this one is capable and that one is not.' No, such

things are not part of the clergyman's values. However, it is the clergyman's duty to voice principles that light the way in the social or political domain."

Wishing to provide further clarification, the patriarch points out, "People trust us. Therefore, they expect a position from us. However, it is not so easy for us. When we were in Paris and reporters asked us about extension, we told them that all those who extended or renewed achieved no success. If we cite facts from history, do we get to be in the position of one who intervenes in political affairs?"

[AL-SAFIR] Are these unbiased historical facts?

[Sufayr] Camille Sham'un ended up with a revolution on his hands. With Fu'ad Shihab, people got enraged. Even with Amin al-Jumayyil... What is happening now? Renew or not renew! Let us hear another story.

[AL-SAFIR] It is said that the president persuaded you at the Harisa meeting?

[Sufayr] Is all that is said true? It has become customary for us to hold mass in Harisa on occasion of the Feast of Our Lady. The papal envoy invited the president of the republic. Others came and there was a discussion. Our opinion is well-known and we expressed it under more complex circumstances than the current circumstances. We expressed our opinion on the parliamentary election when some came and asked us: Should we or should we not run for election? Should we or should we not vote? We gave them our opinion. What we expressed was just an opinion that is binding to nobody.

[AL-SAFIR] Did you tell them: It is interdicted, and knowing this, you are free to do whatever you wish to do?

[Sufayr] I told them: This is my opinion, but I do not hold anybody bound to it. If somebody wishes to embrace it, I will not stop him and if somebody wishes to reject it, I will not hold him bound to it. Every person has his convictions. I do not claim freedom for myself and deny it to others.

[AL-SAFIR] But your opinion has left its impact on people.

[Sufayr] Yes, it has influenced people.

Elections

[AL-SAFIR] Now that three years have passed, don't you find that you were wrong in your position toward the elections?

[Sufayr] No, we were not wrong at all. Rather, I believe that there are those who have regretted the fact that they were swayed. Even a deputy cannot find a way

to express his opinion domestically. I recall that 50 deputies signed an appeal once and then proceeded to vote in the opposite direction. What made them change their position? When the will is shackled, should one become a false witness?

[AL-SAFIR] Are you alluding to a vote of confidence in the government?

[Sufayr] Yes. Has anything changed? A deputy must have his influence and he must represent the people and their opinions.

[AL-SAFIR] But is it reasonable that people sit in their homes and shut their doors?

[Sufayr] No, not shut their doors. Participation is a duty when the climate is appropriate.

[AL-SAFIR] But people make the climate appropriate.

[Sufayr] People don't feel it makes a difference whether they vote or not. So and so will be deputy, and that is the end of that.

[AL-SAFIR] But if all participate, they will have an impact.

[Sufayr] Even if they participate, they will not be able to do anything "because all is done and finished." People are aware of this fact. The names are prepared in advance.

[AL-SAFIR] Does this mean that the flaw is in the election law?

[Sufayr] Of course.

[AL-SAFIR] Have you developed a clear idea of how the election law should be?

[Sufayr] Generally, I say that the government must permit people to express their opinion of the candidates, not impose its opinions on the people.

[AL-SAFIR] What is your opinion of the single electoral constituency, for example?

[Sufayr] I don't know whether it should be a single constituency or something else. However, I believe that a single constituency is acceptable if there are parties. Elections will then be held on the basis of party platform. But there are no parties here.

[AL-SAFIR] Does this mean that a small constituency is better?

[Sufayr] If it represents the people's opinion. But a small constituency also has its pitfalls. There is no ideal law. Some say that a degree of radicalism could perhaps emanate from a small constituency, thus motivating

the deputy to engage in sectarian one-upmanship and opening the door to graft.

[AL-SAFIR] So what is the solution?

[Sufayr] Specialized people know. I am talking of principles, and the principle is based providing people with the opportunity to express their opinion in their representatives.

[AL-SAFIR] But there are numerous ways.

[Sufayr] Yes, there are numerous ways. However, they must be sound.

[AL-SAFIR] There are those today who propose nine governorates.

[Sufayr] Some propose nine governorates and some call for a single constituency. In Europe and in France, every constituency has a deputy. Perhaps they will make them 128 constituencies in Lebanon. There are many kinds of constituencies. Some propose that the elections be held in two stages: The first stage in the district and then in the bigger constituency. All this is the concern of specialists.

[AL-SAFIR] In less than a year, we will be approaching new parliamentary elections. If conditions remain unchanged, will you again advocate a boycott?

[Sufayr] I don't know, I don't know. I did not advocate a boycott previously.

[AL-SAFIR] In principle...

[Sufayr] The principle is wrong to start with. The same principle produces the same outcome, and the outcome is a goat, even if it flies.

[AL-SAFIR] Should people participate if conditions change?

[Sufayr] Certainly. Participation is a national duty. People must participate, but only when the climate permits free expression and not in a false climate.

[AL-SAFIR] How would you define appropriate conditions?

[Sufayr] In the presence of an election law and of electoral constituencies that permit people to express their opinion. The people must be reassured so that when a deputy wins, they know that he has won with their votes. What is it? Is this the first time we will have elections?

[AL-SAFIR] But there are those who say that elections have always been rigged.

[Sufayr] No, not always.

[AL-SAFIR] They were often rigged by one degree or another.

[Sufayr] Yes, at times there was a small degree of forgery. However, there is a difference between 5 percent and 95 percent. When we establish an election law that prevents people from expressing their opinion, then one faction wins with the votes of another faction. Isn't this forgery?

[AL-SAFIR] Ideally, any election law permits people to select their representatives.

[Sufayr] I am talking of the principle. They must carefully consider a governorate's or a constituency's sectarian distribution so that a Muslim will not be elected with Christian votes and a Christian will not be elected with Muslim votes when neither feels any bond with his voters.

We are aware that it is impossible for a Muslim to be elected with Muslim votes solely and a Christian with Christian votes solely. However, there has to be an acceptable mix that does not favor one faction over another.

[AL-SAFIR] What is your opinion of the voting card and can it curtail forgery?

[Sufayr] They say that they have brought voting cards and that they completed them sometime ago. If the card ensures that people cast their vote without forgery, then I welcome it, but where is this card? It hasn't appeared yet. It has cost them a lot to date. When they permit people's vote to have a value...

[AL-SAFIR] Who are they?

[Sufayr] Those in the seats (meaning the people in power) spoke of municipal elections in the past (he said it laughing). When they feel that elections don't serve their purposes, they say "forget it" and when they do serve their purposes, they say "yes." Elections are the same, whether parliamentary or municipal. They are democracy, and democracy means the people. Is it reasonable that a country claim that it is democratic when it has not held municipal elections for 30 years? Is it reasonable for a district commissioner to control 20 municipalities? There is what is called administrative decentralization. People must shoulder the responsibility and must manage their affairs. Every person must manage his household affairs. People must feel that they have a role. Things must not be imposed on them from above.

[AL-SAFIR] Do people have a role in presidential elections?

[Sufayr] We are talking of parliamentary, municipal, and even presidential elections. There is nothing to prevent elections similar to the elections in France, where the people elect the president.

[AL-SAFIR] Do you support election of the president by the people directly?

[Sufayr] In principle, we cannot do it. People are elected in one way or another.

[AL-SAFIR] Direct presidential election by the people means that the president's sectarian identity cannot be specified.

[Sufayr] We are not against the abolition of sectarianism. However, we have said repeatedly that sectarianism has to be abolished from the hearts and minds. It has to be abolished with long-term education, and not overnight. For example, does it occur to anybody to ask anybody else about his religion in the United States?

Where Is Implementation of al-Ta'if Agreement?

[AL-SAFIR] What is your evaluation of this phase?

[Sufayr] I wish the country had a sound democratic system to which the people can resort. I feel that the people know the rights and duties they want. I wish this would be done in accordance with a sound democratic regime. I don't ask for an ideal regime, just acceptable. As to how, they must apply the laws. They must implement al-Ta'if agreement as they agreed on it. Decentralized administration can, for example, be established. Another question is, for example, where is the constitutional council, and where are many other things?

[AL-SAFIR] What point has the displaced persons' issue reached?

[Sufayr] The displaced persons are supposed to have been returned to their homes long ago.

[AL-SAFIR] Is this return faltering, in your opinion?

[Sufayr] I don't know. It is moving slowly. It should be faster and it should not be just a weekend return (which is what happens now).

[AL-SAFIR] How about return to AL-DAMUR?

[Sufayr] All the requirements that bind the citizen to the soil must be made available, beginning with schools, electricity, water and ending with everything else.

[AL-SAFIR] What is impeding this return, in your opinion? Is it security or is it trust?

[Sufayr] We said previously and we reiterate here that the displaced persons' issue must involve a workshop and must not be confined to the Ministry of Displaced

Persons' Affairs. It requires all the ministries: Public works, telephone, electricity, education...

[AL-SAFIR] Can the issue of reconciliation in Mount Lebanon be considered a thing of the past and an obstacle no longer?

[Sufayr] There are several other factors.

[AL-SAFIR] Minister Junblatt censures the church for not helping.

[Sufayr] (With a laugh) That is okay, that is okay.

[AL-SAFIR] What about the Harisa meeting? Was it able to resolve matters?

[Sufayr] The truth is that there is blame. Blame exists.

Dialogue With Syria

[AL-SAFIR] A number of ministers have spoken of dialogue and mediation efforts with Syria.

[Sufayr] I have nothing to say.

[AL-SAFIR] Do they, too, have nothing?

[Sufayr] I don't know.

[AL-SAFIR] There are those who think that the presidential elections are influenced by the Maronite sect's relations with Syria, that you have a role in developing these relations, and that the dialogue is faltering.

[Sufayr] The president of the republic belongs to the entire country. When he becomes president, he carries the Maronite identity no longer.

[AL-SAFIR] Is there a flaw in the relations with Syria?

[Sufayr] No, certainly not. Aren't those who go to Syria Maronites?

[AL-SAFIR] Is there dialogue on selection of the next president of the republic?

[Sufayr] Are we the ones who do the selecting? Those who select are well-known. There are deputies and influential circles.

[AL-SAFIR] The Maronite Patriarchate has a preponderant opinion.

[Sufayr] Is there a constitutional provision? Where is it?

[AL-SAFIR] It is said that the army commander visited you on Friday.

[Sufayr] (laughing) We don't announce anybody's visit. They do.

[AL-SAFIR] Why haven't the Americans visited you in seven months?

[Sufayr] We met with a delegation from a Lebanese extraction last week. Aren't they Americans?

[AL-SAFIR] What point has the synod issue reached?

[Sufayr] The second charter will be issued shortly. They have not announced it. However, I believe that this will happen in mid-September 1995.

[AL-SAFIR] Is the synod still tied to the pope's visit?

[Sufayr] Not necessarily. It could be in Rome, but they have not made an announcement yet.

Ja'ja' Issue

[AL-SAFIR] What is your opinion of the developments, beginning with what happened at al-Dhuq church and ending with the sentence against Ja'ja'?

[Sufayr] They started in church and ended somewhere else. To date, nothing has been announced about the church issue.

[AL-SAFIR] Before the sentence was issued, you said that you had full confidence in the judiciary, but since issuance of the sentence, you have criticized the judiciary and said that the conscience may take a nap at times.

[Sufayr] I did not mean the judiciary. However, when they single out Samir Ja'ja' to the exclusion of others who did what Samir had done and more, then this is unjust. The judiciary is our final haven.

[AL-SAFIR] Responding to you, the judiciary have said that they try whoever is referred to them by the government.

[Sufayr] There has to be harmony between the government and the judiciary. Is the process accidental or planned? If there is justice, then it must encompass all people. When there is peace, it must be for all people. These are indivisible values. We cannot have peace when others cannot have it. The same goes for justice. There is a pardon, and it must include all people.

[AL-SAFIR] But the pardon included him and he was appointed minister twice.

[Sufayr] Again, as we once said, it is either power or jail. One has to either join the government or obey it. Where is free expression?

[AL-SAFIR] Are you talking about free expression in connection with Samir Ja'ja'?

[Sufayr] Now, the issue is: Wasn't Samir Ja'ja' denied free expression? When he threatened people, we stood against him. You know that we stood against him when he was in the prime of his power, but when events like those that have taken place do happen, he should be

treated like everybody else or everybody else should be treated as he is. Should they do this to him just because he did not join the ranks or because he has a different political opinion?

[AL-SAFIR] You have repeatedly expressed concern for public liberties. Do you see a development in this regard?

[Sufayr] These liberties concern you more than anybody else. There are things that are said and things that are not said; things that are written and things that are not written. Man must have freedom to express himself. However, this does not mean that he can be anarchic. Freedom has its limits.

Resistance and the South

[AL-SAFIR] Do you have an opinion or a gist that reflects the forthcoming November phase?

[Sufayr] Of course. The country is ours and we will do all that is in our power for a better future. God willing, we will surpass all difficulties. There is the still ongoing peace process.

[AL-SAFIR] While the south is in this condition?

[Sufayr] The south...all fronts are calm except for the south.

[AL-SAFIR] Because there is Israeli occupation there.

[Sufayr] And there is no occupation in other places?

[AL-SAFIR] This does not mean that there should be no resistance.

[Sufayr] We are distinguished—distinguished in everything.

[AL-SAFIR] Do you think that conditions, especially economic and living conditions, could improve if a new president is elected?

[Sufayr] Improve with what? And what is the president's connection with this? It is said that he has powers no longer. In any case, we hope that there will be at the head of the government a man who helps people overcome difficulties and who is concerned with their affairs.

[AL-SAFIR] Be he a civilian or a military man?

[Sufayr] It makes no difference, it makes no difference.

[AL-SAFIR] You have repeatedly talked of the frustration and injustice that afflict Christians and about the danger of emigration from the homeland.

[Sufayr] Is the frustration among Christians only? Haven't you seen the latest Beirut elections in which 96

percent of the voters refused to participate? What does this mean? Are these voters Maronites? This shows that all citizens from all sects resent the situation.

[AL-SAFIR] What about your position on the citizenship law? There has been a lot of clamor on this issue.

[Sufayr] It is well-known that when one is granted the citizenship, he is being honored. There are people who have lived here and who are entitled to it, but how could everybody be naturalized in droves, without anybody knowing the numbers? There has to be harmony among the citizens. I don't know about naturalizing people to live with other people who have different tendencies. I am told that in the United States, nobody is granted the citizenship until he is tested and until it is made certain that this individual can live in harmony with the society. He is tested in the country's history and constitution, and about its presidents. When a person applies for a driving license, they ask him questions and they test him. This is how things are managed. The consequences of what has happened here will not be commendable in the long run and they will change the country's character.

[AL-SAFIR] Are they demographic-sectarian consequences?

[Sufayr] Everything, everything.

[AL-SAFIR] Do you think, for example, that there is a connection between the naturalization issue and the resettlement issue?

[Sufayr] There are those who say that this is a preparation for resettlement. Ordinarily, the president of the republic naturalizes 10 or 15 individuals at the end of his term. It has never happened that so many were naturalized that the Official Gazette had to be published in 500 pages. Some of those naturalized don't even know the number of their family members or whether they have 20 children or five children. They say that the ratio of naturalized Christians to others is one-third to two-thirds.

***Mirhij: Relationship With Syria Built on 'Rock'**

96AA0020B Beirut MONDAY MORNING in English
4 Sep 95 pp 18-19

[Interview with former Minister Bisharah Mirhij by Joseph Malkan; place and date not given — first five paragraphs are MONDAY MORNING introduction]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Former Minister Bisharah Mirhij believes that a new approach is needed in the country's political life, one which avoids the "deceit" he perceives to be characteristic of it.

In an interview, Mirhij, who represents a Beirut constituency in Parliament, said: "A new approach is re-

quired, one based on honesty with oneself and with the public, on sacrifice for the sake of building the nation, and on ending the attempts to exploit the State and use public resources to serve private ends." He added: "We must resist the temptation to despair of reforming Lebanese institutions, even though we sometimes have the impression that political activity is about to be stifled.

Mirhij has little time for all the talk about whether the presidential term should be renewed or extended. "I think all the talk... is unimportant, because whoever is elected, be he a newly-elected president or one whose term has been renewed, will have to face severe tests of his leadership qualities. Should he be unable to measure up to the challenge, he might lead the nation to disaster."

One thing the next president must have, in Mirhij's view, is an awareness of the importance of Lebanon's special relationship with Syria. Syria, he told us, "stands as a rock of stability for Lebanon as we face the challenges being posed to us. That's why there should be coordination in any action undertaken by the governments of Lebanon and Syria. In this, the president of the republic occupies a crucial place."

Here is a translation of the interview:

[Malkan] How do you perceive the political atmosphere at the end of the president's term of office?

[Bisharah] The end of the president's term remains something under discussion, but a clear vision hasn't appeared yet. That's unfortunate for political life in Lebanon.

[Malkan] When will matters appear more clearly?

[Bisharah] The moment the president's term of office ends.

[Malkan] Can you elaborate?

[Bisharah] The reason behind this is the defectiveness of Lebanese political activity. It's also caused by the fact that none of the candidates has presented himself with a political program, nor have they started their election campaigns, since they believe that the decision as to who the president will be will be taken by foreign powers, however, if one of the candidates was able to dominate the solution, to obtain a wide mass support, and to earn the trust of members of Parliament, any foreign power would have to conform with this overwhelming current of opinion.

[Malkan] Since 1943, the year of Lebanese independence, not one candidate has presented himself with a clearly conceived program. What is the reason, in your view?

[Bisharah] It's because everyone thinks the decision is that of other countries, whereas the real decision is ours.

[Malkan] Ours? How?

[Bisharah] It's a very complicated, dynamic operation. I say that if the candidate was able to obtain real support, and if he had the requisite qualities, any foreign power would have to acquiesce in this situation. It is wrong to believe that the decision need be a foreign one. That would be a shirking of political responsibility on the part of the Lebanese, a degradation of political life.

Everything is possible. Such an outcome is certainly possible in the present circumstances.

[Malkan] Are you in favor of modifying Article 49 of the Constitution to enable the president either to be elected for a full second term or to have his present term extended for a certain period?

[Bisharah] I favor respecting the Constitution and abiding by its rules.

[Malkan] Are you in favor of an extension of the president's mandate, giving a new, full mandate, prolongation, a reelection, or of electing another person?

[Bisharah] I favor honesty in political matters. We are fed up with lies. A country cannot be governed if its political life is based on deceit.

[Malkan] What's to be done?

[Bisharah] A new approach is required, an approach based on honesty with oneself and with the public, on sacrifice for the sake of building the nation, and on ending attempts to exploit the government and use public resources to serve personal objectives. We must resist the temptation to despair of reforming Lebanese institutions, even though we sometimes have the impression that political activity is about to be stifled.

[Malkan] People are talking in terms of an extension of the presidential term. What is your opinion?

[Bisharah] I think all the talk about an extension and a re-election is unimportant, because whoever is elected, be he a newly-elected president or one whose term has been renewed, will have to face severe tests of his leadership qualities. Should he be unable to measure up to the challenges, he might lead the nation to a disaster.

[Malkan] What is required, in your view?

[Bisharah] A new spirit, new approaches, a new attitude of mind which gives priority to the service of the nation, are required. The person himself is not as important as the approach he will have to take.

[Malkan] Not the person as an individual but the approach he will take...

[Bisharah] Exactly. The approach is very important, on condition that it is reconciling, saving, constructive, and is not founded on deceit and robbery.

[Malkan] Do you favor one particular candidate?

[Bisharah] I don't care who the candidate is. What counts is where the country is heading.

[Malkan] When will the battle start?

[Bisharah] Unfortunately, it hasn't started yet. If only it would start so that we can see who the true leaders are.

[Malkan] In other words...

[Bisharah] I mean that we would get to know what ideas the candidates have, how they would like to see this country develop over the next six years, and we could ensure that the presidential campaign doesn't remain behind the scenes.

[Malkan] What influence are the surrounding countries exerting on the domestic Lebanese situation as the president's term draws to its end?

[Bisharah] Lebanon belongs to its surroundings. It cannot ignore the region, with which it continuously interacts. For us, the region is, first of all, defined by its fateful relationship with Syria, which stands as a rock of stability for Lebanon as we face the challenges being posed to us. That's why there should be coordination in any action undertaken by the governments of Lebanon and Syria. In this, the president of the republic occupies a crucial place.

The new president should be deeply familiar with the concept, as well as the tenor, of the relationship between Lebanon and Syria and should abide by it. He should understand this relationship and its political, economic and other dimensions so that there will be harmony in their common endeavors.

[Malkan] In speaking of the influences of the surrounding region of the Lebanese scene, are you referring to the Arab-Israeli peace process?

[Bisharah] In the modern world, the interests of countries differ. There are various interests between all countries, and it is no coincidence that the Lebanese should aspire to play an important role in the political activity of the United States itself.

[Malkan] How do you mean?

[Bisharah] By influencing the Lebanese communities in the United States and by activating the Lebanese presence in the diaspora, generally.

The essential element in this matter is to have an internal unity which cancels out all domestic discords. This is essential if the work of national reconstruction is to be carried forward, and if its regional and international interests are to be served.

[Malkan] Does the success of national reconciliation depend on the man who is eventually elected?

[Bisharah] One would prefer a reconciliation between the interests of the Lebanese, the Syrians, and of all the other powers that wish Lebanon well.

[Malkan] Will there be such a Lebanese-Syrian-American reconciliation of this kind?

[Bisharah] If there is a reconciliation, it would be in Lebanon's interests. We base our evaluation of this matter on national factors which are essential in the choice of the Lebanese president. Our relationship with Syria is built on rock. As far as any other country is concerned, we would welcome any international support.

[Malkan] Who, in your view, will be the principal elector of the new president?

[Bisharah] Lebanon and its institutions.

[Malkan] Which ones in particular?

[Bisharah] First of all, Parliament, then public opinion, the trade unions and professional associations, the media...

***Islamic Group Deputy Critical of Administration**

96AA0020C Beirut MONDAY MORNING in English
11 Sep 95 pp 20-21

[Interview with Member of Parliament Zuhayr al-'Ubaydi by Nadim Abu-Ghannam; place and date not given — first five paragraphs are MONDAY MORNING introduction]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Member of Parliament Zuhayr al-'Ubaydi is unsparing in his criticism of the Lebanese Administration, not only the conduct of economic and social policy by the cabinet of Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, but, also in the actions of the "troika" comprising the three top leaders.

Speaking in an interview, al-'Ubaydi — a member of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah [Islamic Group], a mainly Sunni grouping of fundamentalist views— said he considered the government's policy on the economic-social level "as being inimical to the great majority of the public," adding: "It is, instead, a policy which panders to the interests of financiers, owners of big companies in Lebanon, and big investors," noting as an example the recent law which set income tax at a

flat rate of 10 percent, instead of being a progressive tax which rose as the size of income rises. This, al-'Ubaydi suggested, was "indicative of the government's wish — the prime minister himself has said it — to make Lebanon a 'tax paradise' so that this company [as printed] will be better able to compete with Israel in attracting foreign investment in the period following a peace settlement with Tel Aviv... The country may well be a 'tax paradise' for foreign investors, but it's also a tax hell for the Lebanese people," he said.

MP al-'Ubaydi noted the role assigned by the Constitution to the legislature of supervising and checking the actions of the executive, in theory the Council of Ministers, but, he argued, it was not so much the Council which governed as the troika, over whose actions Parliament had no control.

He pointed out, too, that many MP's felt that "a number of public bodies have been 'abducted' by politicians who use the income of these institutions for their own benefit, without any control being exercised over them... Frankly, the financial measures the government takes are intended to benefit prominent personalities, who divide the spoils of office among themselves... We believe there can be no administrative reform before there is political reform, above all, before there is a change in the outlook of certain politicians in this country."

Here is a translation of the interview:

[Abu-Ghannam] How will tension in South Lebanon affect the peace negotiations in the Middle East?

[Al-'Ubaydi] The problem of Israeli-occupied territory in the South and in West al-Biqa is similar to that in other Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967, and in 1948, when the Zionist entity was planted in Arab land. These territories form an Israeli pressure toll in the Arab-Israeli negotiations, in order to impose conditions of surrender on the Arab nation. We consider the repeated attacks on Lebanon's South and West al-Biqa a link in a long chain of attacks, which are, as I say, a form of pressure on the Arab negotiator. As for the calm, we witness every now and then, it is a sort of sedative used by the Israeli war machine to disintegrate and break the link between the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in the negotiations. As an Islamic movement for change, we reject in principle negotiations with an enemy which occupies Arab land. These negotiations are rejected by the broad Islamic trend, not only in Lebanon, but in all the Arab world. The reason is that we consider the Zionist entity an extraneous entity which understands no language other than the language of war and arms. That is why, in our political program, we ask the Arab states to coordinate efforts to establish a strong Arab front to confront Israel, to deter aggression against

any Arab state. Unfortunately, the concessions made by the Arab regimes which signed treaties and agreements with Israel, from the Camp David Agreement to the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty and the Gaza-Jericho accord, have thrown the Arab world into the hands of the Israelis.

[Abu-Ghannam] In the light of what you've said, do you believe that the negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli and on the Israeli-Lebanese tracks will be postponed until after the Israeli parliamentary elections, or will these negotiations be resumed soon?

[Al-'Ubaydi] Despite its attacks and its duplicity, Israel has not succeeded in imposing its will on Syria and Lebanon. We see that despite the Gaza-Jericho accord and the concessions made by the Palestinian leadership, the Israelis have made no compensations in return, whether on the level of the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, or the expansion of what is called the autonomous rule to the other parts of the West Bank. Nor has Jordan received what was coming to it in terms of its treaty with Tel Aviv, either in terms of water on of [as printed] the land occupied by Israel. This Israeli deception was followed by another, that of "renting" certain Jordanian territory to Israel for a long term. This deception alerted the Syrian and Lebanese governments, which postponed the negotiations, in accordance with the factors witnessed by the negotiating parties, particularly following statements by (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin and (Foreign Minister Shimon) Peres, announcing that the negotiations would be postponed until after the end of the Israeli Parliamentary elections in 1996. It would, therefore, seem that the situation in the Arab world awaits the outcome of the forthcoming Israeli elections.

[Abu-Ghannam] Economic conditions are very difficult for many people. How would you comment on the government's failure to devise a socioeconomic policy?

[Al-'Ubaydi] If we evaluate the government's policy on the economic and social levels, we will see that it is unbalanced and that the government is ignoring factors which affect the public's living standards.

When the first al-Hariri cabinet was formed in October of 1992, all the Lebanese hoped that the economic situation would improve. The exchange rate of the Lebanese pound to the dollar improved, from 2,600 Lebanese pounds to the dollar in October 1992 to 1,612 Lebanese pounds now, but certain impudent merchants took advantage of this improvement in the status of the Lebanese pound, continuing to set prices on the basis of the dollar rate at 2,600 Lebanese pounds, so that prices did not fall as people had expected.

During a recent session of the parliamentary Committee on Economy and Trade, to which I belong, members discussed the issue of rising prices and the failure of the government to do anything to protect consumers from rapacious shopkeepers. We decided to form a subcommittee to look into retail prices to ascertain whether prices had fallen at the same rate at which the dollar-rate had fallen. The subcommittee subsequently found that prices had not, in general, fallen in line with the improvement in the exchange rate; far from it. But no note was taken of our report by the authorities, as if there was a conspiracy of silence on the part of officialdom not to lay this matter before Parliament.

I have pointed out this scandal more than once, but nobody listens. I consider the government's policy on the economic-social level as being inimical to the interests of the great majority of the public. It is, instead, a policy which panders to the interests of financiers, owners of big companies in Lebanon, and big investors. As an example, I note the extraordinary law the government has had Parliament enact, which fixes the income tax at a flat rate of 10 percent, instead of being a progressive tax increasing as a merchant's income increases. This is indicative of the government's wish — the prime minister himself has said it — to make Lebanon a "tax paradise" so that this country will be better able to compete with Israel in attracting foreign investment in the period following a peace settlement with Tel-Aviv, when Lebanon will have surrendered to the Jewish state. The country may well be a "tax paradise" for foreign investors, but it's also a tax hell for the Lebanese people.

In this connection, I cannot refrain from recalling the fat profits the France Telecom and Siemens companies have — according to the admission of Telecommunications Minister al-Fadl Shalaq himself — in setting up a cellular telephone system, despite the fact that the system malfunctions constantly. At the same time, the sums the government has devoted to the cellular system have been diverted from rehabilitation of the conventional phone system, whose performance also leaves much to be desired. It's another example of officialdom catering to the wants of foreign companies at the expense of the Lebanese.

And what of the State's failure to supervise the activity of the Beirut financial market? The Ahmad Da'uq scandal, which hurt a large number of those Lebanese who had invested money in his company, is a case in point. It would seem there are no laws to regulate the use of funds invested in firms like Da'uq's, which means that he and others — and they are numerous in the Lebanese market — can invest the money of Lebanese depositors in various speculations. It is not enough for

the State to regulate the origin of the money which is invested in such companies. It must also supervise how the money is used, to see that the rights and interests of depositors are maintained.

Frankly, the financial measures the government takes are intended to benefit prominent personalities, who divide the spoils of office among themselves. Their well-publicized disagreement are largely differences over how to share those spoils out. Is it fair that the country should be prey to the personal ambitions and selfish greed of those in authority? Would that the prevailing mentality in the corridors of power will change, so we can build a nation of honest and effective institutions on which we can base our political and administrative processes.

As it is, we in Parliament feel that a number of public bodies have been "abducted" by politicians who use the income of these institutions for their own benefit, without any control being exercised over them. We believe there can be no administrative reform before there is political reform, above all, before there is a change in the outlook of certain politicians in this country.

[Abu-Ghannam] How do you see the government's failure to organize elections for mayors and municipal councils?

[Al-'Ubaydi] The municipalities are a diminishing part of Lebanon's democratic life, with the local government that are actually defunct being administered by the district commissioners (*qa'immaqams*) under the supervision of the Interior Minister. This means the Interior Ministry is free to do what it likes with their revenues, in accordance with the wish of the government.

[Abu-Ghannam] There are those who say we may be heading towards some form of military rule. How can we deal with that?

[Al-'Ubaydi] I think the facts on the ground give reason for such fears, especially what happened on July 19, when the security forces acted with great force to repress demonstrations being staged by working people during a general strike. The ban on demonstrations is a violation of the Constitution, which protects freedom of expression and of opinion, and what are peaceful demonstrations other than a means of expressing opinion?

As I said during demonstration in Bisharah al-Khuri St., we are now confronting a virtual dictatorship.

[Abu-Ghannam] What is the stand of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah on the much-discussed proposal to extend the term of President Ilyas al-Hirawi?

[Al-'Ubaydi] Our Political Bureau has given special attention to this subject, we do not see that such an extension would be of any benefit to Lebanon. We do not, however, object to amendment of the Constitution to make it possible for all Maronite citizens to be a candidate for the presidential office, which is not now possible, as the text of the Constitution stands.

I say it very clearly: the continuing rule by the troika is a violation of the Constitution because it restricts the authority of the Council of Ministers. It is because of the troika system that Parliament often complains that it does not know whom to hold responsible or hold accountable for certain matters. In principle, it is the Council of Ministers which we should hold responsible for conduct of State policy. But in fact, it is the troika which is conducting that policy, and we in the legislature have no way of calling the troika to account. That's why democracy in Lebanon is out of order. We consider that because of this disorder, there is no justification for an extension of the mandate.

As you know, about a quarter of the Lebanese people have to live in poverty, a fact confirmed by statistics of the United Nations Development gram [as printed] A family of five has to earn at least 300 dollars a month to pay for food alone, so how can it pay for other expenses like clothing, housing, medical care, school fees, etc.? It's a deplorable fact that not a few people die at the doors of hospitals because their relatives can't afford the cost of their medical care.

If what is meant by "extension" is keeping matters as they are, then we cannot support such a step.

[Abu-Ghannam] On what do the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah and Hezbollah agree, and on what do they differ?

[Al-'Ubaydi] As an Islamic movement for change, we are in agreement with all such movements which seek the best interests of this country. Our relationship with Hezbollah is a firm one, and we have phased coordination with each other, especially in regard to proposed legislation and political issues, in order to work out a unified stand. In this we are at one with all forces for change in the country.

We have good relations with Hezbollah, and there is a continuing exchange of visits between our leaders and political committees and theirs. Notably, we stand together in our support for resistance to the Israeli enemy, so that the land may be liberated from occupation.

***Elie Skaf: Governing Team Not Trustworthy**

96AA0020D Beirut MONDAY MORNING in English
18 Sep 95 pp 16-17

[Interview with Member of Parliament Elie Skaf by Raniyah al-Hashim; place and date note given — first four paragraphs are MONDAY MORNING introduction]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Member of Parliament Elie Skaf has expressed hope that a new generation can be formed which will be free of the sectarian trammels now shackling this country's political life. It was a great pity, he told us, to see each senior Lebanese official giving priority to the advancement of the interests of his own sect. "What we should aim for," he said, "is to create a new generation with a new outlook and capable of meeting the kinds of challenges we will face in the twenty-first century."

Skaf, who represents al-Biqā' town of Zahlāh in Parliament, said he was opposed to the widely-mooted — and now apparently virtually inevitable — extension of the term of President Ilyas al-Hirawi following a constitutional amendment allowing for such an extension. The present governing team, he argued, is "not trustworthy," not least in view of its handling of the economy. It would be better, he said, if the president were elected directly by the people, "90 percent" of whom would oppose an extension, he believed.

He deplored the recent incident in which a rally in Zahlāh to welcome him home from a visit to North Lebanon, following his wedding there to the daughter of former Member of Parliament Jibran Tawq, was abruptly terminated by order of the security forces. The general condemnation in Zahlāh of the police order, he averred, a kind of "referendum on the people's opinion of Elie Skaf, one which has made me think I am accepted by all my region's inhabitants."

Here is a translation of the interview:

[Al-Hashim] What is the situation of yourself in al-Biqā' generally and in Zahlāh specifically?

[Skaf] During the last elections our motto was that "it is the people who have the final word." This is why it is much easier to evaluate my position during elections, but that doesn't mean that we are away from the people and unable to know their needs.

After the recent incident in Zahlāh, when the government ordered the people of the town to cancel the party they wanted to hold to welcome us home from our visit to the North, the people protested in large numbers against the government's order. This reaction can be seen either as a kind of revolt against the government

or as a demonstration of the people's care about me. I think it's a mixture of both of these.

I also consider that if I had not been personally involved in this affair, this reaction wouldn't have taken place. Anyway, we have to consider this reaction of the Zahlīotes, and of all al-Biqā' people, as a kind of referendum on the people's opinion of Elie Skaf, one which has made me think I am accepted — thank God — by all my region's inhabitants.

[Al-Hashim] Can we consider you to be a leading figure in the Greek Catholic community, like your father, the late Joseph Skaf?

[Skaf] I have made it clear on more than one occasion that, like my father, I do not think in sectarian terms. I think it's a great pity to see each Lebanese leader giving priority to his own sect. Shiites have many leaders, Speaker Nabih Birri and others, who maintain Shiite rights and, indeed, much more. The Sunnites are also flourishing with the presence of Premier al-Hariri in office. The Druze community, too, has had its rights maintained under their well-known leadership.

On the other hand, among the Christian communities there exists a great gap, as there is no leader who stands out from the rest. This is especially true of the Greek Catholic community. It is obvious that the Greek Catholic community has been deprived of its rights if we compare its present situation with what its situation was in the past. When we met with Premier al-Hariri, we told him that the government had deprived the Greek Catholics of all the senior posts which used to be set aside for members of our community, and which made it the third or fourth-ranked in the country.

All this hasn't taken place by chance. It is clear that it was planned and decided on beforehand by one whose name I will not mention, though he knows who he is. I know that my reactions are noticed, and that is why I won't speak in the name of the Catholic community, because each time I say something, more blows are directed at us.

[Al-Hashim] Then you support what was mentioned in the report drawn up by the Greek Catholic Community Council on the subject of the sect's inadequate representation in the Civil Service...

[Skaf] Of course I do. I'm a member of the Council. In any case, I doubt that anything will come of it since all the principal posts have already been filled.

[Al-Hashim] Isn't the president of the Economic and Social Council going to be a Greek Catholic?

[Skaf] Let's just wait and see if matters go our way.

[Al-Hashim] Have you got any solution for this problem?

[Skaf] No solutions can be expected from the present government.

[Al-Hashim] What is your position towards the approaching presidential election? Which of the candidates will you vote for, and do you support extending the president's term if such a proposal is formally made?

[Skaf] My opinion on this subject is well known, and I have repeatedly spoken of it. Whenever the question is raised, I express myself in the negative without hesitation. My stand is not the result of personal thoughts and ambitions, even if I had personal causes for my decision. I consider the welfare of the country, which does not lie in extending the president's term. There are many reasons for not amending the Constitution so as to enable the president's term to be extended, among them the fact that the present ruling circle is not trustworthy, a fact seen in the negative effects its administration has had on the economy. If it continues in power, matters will get worse and we will have to deal with a social problem which will become a political one whose final outcome none can foretell. Of course, this is a political analysis based on calculations and the opinion of the people. I wish that the people could elect the president directly, as they are the ones who have the right to decide. If I'm not mistaken, I believe that 90 percent of them would be against extending the presidential term.

[Al-Hashim] Do you have a specific candidate?

[Skaf] I don't have the right to choose one, but I will suggest what kind of qualities he should have. We need a trustworthy, patriotic and just person who will work for the founding of institutions. That's what we need nowadays. Our present system of government can best be compared to a kind of private "plantation," with each one exploiting the plantation to get as much as he can for himself with no thought for the good of the nation. If this continues, we will be heading for serious trouble, as we all know how, and according to what, officials are ranked in the Civil Service.

[Al-Hashim] Only some of the al-Ta'if Agreement's provisions have been applied. Looking at those provisions apart from the others, has their application been carried out satisfactorily, in your view?

[Skaf] Al-Ta'if was a plan to end the war and rebuild governmental institutions. Many matters were discussed and many decisions were taken to end the war, and they have succeeded in doing so. The most important thing is that the guns have been silenced, that militia rule is no more, that the country's regions have been reunited, and that security has been reestablished.

Other matters need more time to be discussed and I'm sure we will reach the expected results because it is the people's will to overcome trouble, and we should not have obstacles in our way. Thank God we have been able to start communication between the different Lebanese sects and rebuilding our institutions.

[Al-Hashim] Don't you think that the State which was supposed to be non-sectarian is more sectarian than ever?

[Skaf] That is true. We have to look for the causes, and I think that the ruling personalities are not trustworthy and that the "troika" makes each person in charge work for his own benefit and that of his own sect. This matter was not taken into consideration and not discussed in al-Ta'if. That is why we need new faces, new ideas and new hope.

[Al-Hashim] Then we have to amend al-Ta'if...

[Skaf] Al-Ta'if has nothing to do with the actual situation. If you read the agreement you see that each minister in the government has to have its own word and liberty, and that is not applied because of the "troika" way of acting.

[Al-Hashim] What is your opinion of the electoral law and of the country's present administrative divisions?

[Skaf] This is a delicate matter, one linked to the sectarian state in which each sect fears the others. That is why I consider that any electoral law has to lay the basis of a long-term plan which results in a state where all sects trust each other in the application of this law. What we aim for is to create a new generation with a new outlook and capable of meeting the kinds of challenges we will face in the twenty-first century.

[Al-Hashim] What about the parliamentary elections due next year?

[Skaf] We still are not ready to have an electoral law for the coming elections, which is why I find it better to follow the existing one.

[Al-Hashim] Are you satisfied that six years is long enough for a presidential term of office, or are you one of those who think it should be reduced to four?

[Skaf] A president could initially be elected for a four-year term, and if he is successful, he could be reelected for an additional two years.

[Al-Hashim] What about the Speaker's term? Should it remain four years?

[Skaf] This is also another matter which needs to be discussed. Let this term be for two years, and if this

speaker turns out to be worthy of trust, then his term could be renewed.

[Al-Hashim] Al-Ta'if spoke of abrogating political sectarianism. Why hasn't this matter been dealt with?

[Skaf] Al-Ta'if was an impossible mission. Each one was promised different things, and when the agreement was signed it was said that everything was appropriate to end the war. That is why I consider that the principal justification for al-Ta'if was that it was a means of ending the war. All the other matters should be dealt with through constitutional means. This will need more time.

[Al-Hashim] What about the question of administrative decentralization?

[Skaf] That is something essential. We have to widen the scope of the work of municipalities in order to make matters easier for people to deal with officialdom.

[Al-Hashim] What of the recurring postponements of mayoral and municipal elections?

[Skaf] I don't trust this government. I would like to remind you that they employed some 3,000 men, all armed to the teeth and backed by tanks, to stop nothing more dangerous than a joyous welcome-home celebration in Zahlah. With this in mind, I would like to ask how they would conduct a municipal election.

I think these elections should be postponed until we finish with the current situation.

[Al-Hashim] Walid Junblatt, minister for the Affairs of Displaced People, has called for small electoral districts, each one with its special characteristics. Do you approve? How can we preserve the characteristics of each community if we have large districts?

[Skaf] This matter brings us back to the issue of sectarianism, which might be the cause of a new war in the coming years. This is what we want to get rid of, and this is why we have to have a plan in the long run, as I previously said, so that the coming generations will be able to accept the idea of different sects living together in harmony.

[Al-Hashim] How can we deal with Minister Junblatt's proposal?

[Skaf] If there is no alternative, we can hold the next round of elections under the present arrangements. In the future, I hope we will, in the next 20 or 25 years have a civilized generation capable of thinking in national rather than in sectarian terms.

[Al-Hashim] Many have expressed fears that, with the increasing burden of State debt and the prospect of peace uncertain, Lebanon's financial position may

become a difficult one. The official reaction to such fears is to come out with reassuring statements. How do you assess the situation?

[Skaf] A law must be passed which holds one person responsible if he undermines the country's financial position. It is not allowed that a senior official should be able to undermine the economy just to advance his personal dreams, with the nation paying the price of this mistakes afterwards.

[Al-Hashim] How do you assess the economic situation?

[Skaf] Two factors affect this matter. The first is a regional one, and the second is an internal one. If a peace settlement is reached, matters will change, and if the elections take place, matters will depend on who will be president. That is why we need a trustworthy person as the head of state.

I think peace and the election of a new president should encourage Lebanese holders of capital to come back and help make the economy flourish. That is what Premier al-Hiriri is counting on, but he is mistaken in his calculations on the internal level, as he is betting on extending the current term.

[Al-Hashim] You have repeatedly stated your belief that we will have peace before the end of 1995. What do you say now?

[Skaf] I stand by what I said; 1995 hasn't ended yet, and if you review the latest steps of the peace process, you will find that peace has been decided upon, because it's no longer the politicians who are discussing peace; it's the work of military representatives, and that means there has been an accord on the principal matters.

The only remaining problem is that of timing. Israel fears that peace could have a negative effect on the Labor Party in the 1996 elections. The United States hopes that peace will enhance the stature of President Clinton, but the Syrians seem uninterested, and they don't care about timing. President al-Asad is relaxed, and he's taking all the time he needs to act.

[Al-Hashim] Where does Iraq lie in all this?

[Skaf] Iraq is a matter which is being kept aside for the moment. It will be dealt with when the time comes.

****Akkar's Rasi Criticizes al-Hariri Governments**
96AA0020E Beirut MONDAY MORNING in English
18 Sep 95 p 18

[Interview with Member of Parliament Karim Rasi by Nadim Abu-Ghannam; place and date not given]

— first two paragraphs are MONDAY MORNING introduction]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Member of Parliament Karim Rasi, who represents a constituency in the 'Akkar District of North Lebanon, regretted that the policies of those governments had done "nothing to improve the living conditions of the majority of the people of this country. "But "instead of raising taxes, the authorities would do better to see how they can cut out wasteful expenditure," he said.

Here is a translation of the interview:

[Abu-Ghannam] How do you envisage the situation in the country in the absence of any measures by the government to deal with social and economic problems?

[Rasi] We hope this government will not continue to take unjust decisions against the people because the policies it has been following will only hasten its departure. These policies have done nothing to improve the living conditions of the majority of the people of this country. The authorities' justification for this negligence seems to be that in a country with a free economic system, governmental action should be minimal, but we see that in advanced countries with a free economic system like the United States and the countries of the European Union, inflation is nothing like it is here. Why is it that nothing is done to control prices here?

Continuation of the present policies will lead to a repetition of the events of May 6, 1992, or perhaps events of even greater magnitude. There is a gap, an abyss, between senior officials, who live in luxury and know little or nothing of the conditions in which the mass of ordinary people live, and the rest of the population. Proof of this is the decree raising the gasoline tax, which resulted in a rise of 40 percent in the price of the fuel. The great protest from all classes of the people which followed this decision was ample proof of the government's wrongheaded attitude. The cabinet said it had increased the tax to obtain the funds to pay for an increase in teachers' salaries. But instead of raising taxes, the authorities would do better to see how they can cut out wasteful expenditure.

[Abu-Ghannam] How do you see the fact that your parliamentary bloc is represented in the cabinet by Istifan al-Duwayhi, who holds the Social Affairs portfolio, rather than the leader of the bloc, Member of Parliament Sulayman Franjiyah?

[Rasi] I see a number of advantages in this arrangement. On the one hand, though Member of Parliament Franjiyah is not a cabinet minister, he does, nevertheless, have a certain influence over the cabinet, in that his positions are well-known. His presence outside the

Council of Ministers but in the legislature represents an element of opposition. If the policies the government is following are valid, they will bear fruit, and its line of action will be shown to be better than the line advocated by Mr. Franjiyah. But if the government's policy line is not good, as I submit it to not, it will be evident from the results it obtains, and in that case Mr. Franjiyah's misgivings will be seen to be well-founded.

The presence of Minister al-Duwayhi in the cabinet as our representative allows us to have inside information as to what is going on in the Council of Ministers and enables us to put the grievances of the people to the executive authority as well as to help our region [North Lebanon] improve the level of its basic services, like water and electricity supplies.

[Abu-Ghannam] When he was a member of the first al-Hariri government, Member of Parliament Franjiyah was often perceived to be the minister most outspoken in his criticism of the government's policies...

[Rasi] I wish we could have two or three ministers like Sulayman Franjiyah in the cabinet because a cabinet needs voices capable of taking issue with the government when it is seen that the cabinet is moving along a manifestly mistaken path. In my opinion, there would have been far less attention paid to the opinion of Parliament if Member of Parliament Franjiyah had not been a member of the first al-Hariri cabinet and had not been able to voice his dissenting views against what was being done. It was — and is — unfortunate that the parliamentary opposition is so dispersed. If it were united, things would be very different, and a situation would exist which would not be in al-Hariri's interest.

We saw nothing of value from the action of the first al-Hariri government, and nothing has emerged from the second. When he was in office, Minister Franjiyah made a point of opposing large-scale reconstruction programs which were in the interests of certain parties, to the exclusion of other persons because the latter were opponents of al-Hariri policies. Certain regions of the country were also favored over others. It often happened that in the cabinet discussion of a particular point, Minister Franjiyah was the only one to voice a view which dissented from the prevailing opinion.

Sulayman Franjiyah held the portfolio of Rural and Municipal Affairs, and this department was deprived of the funds it needed and denied certain powers it required to function properly, all because of the political disputes between Premier al-Hariri and Minister Franjiyah. All this worked very much against the best interests of the municipalities and of rural people, but the prime minister's concern was not to further the work of the

ministry, but to get the portfolio away from Minister Franjiyah.

[Abu-Ghannam] Do you think this is the reason the elections for mayors and municipal councils, postponed for years, have been put off yet again?

[Rasi] This is one reason. There are others.

In this connection, one would like to know why the 'Akkar District, which I represent, has been deprived of so many things in terms of funds and essential services? Prominent personalities of the region from all walks of life have expressed dismay that the district is not represented in the cabinet. With its voice absent from the highest seat of executive power, how can it expect to be treated fairly, in accordance with its needs, which are great?

[Abu-Ghannam] I gather from your remarks that little has improved in 'Akkar since the advent of Mr. al-Hariri in 1992...

[Rasi] Frankly, the only thing which has changed is the electricity supply, which has improved slightly. To put it another way, only about one percent of the improvement we expected has come about.

[Abu-Ghannam] The government's steps to regulate private radio and television stations have met with strong criticism, not least from the owners of those stations. What is your comment in this respect?

[Rasi] Put it this way: the audio-visual media must be at the service of the nation, as they are in Syria and elsewhere in the Arab world. We cannot allow anarchy to prevail in the media sphere, since the media themselves would be the first to be harmed by such a situation, which would not be for the good of the country as a whole.

Having said that, I must add that we will not accept a media code which is biased against freedom of expression. Parliament will take action to see that this doesn't happen. You may recall that when the first al-Hariri government banned the broadcasting of news and programs of political content by private radio and TV stations, Parliament objected strongly and was chiefly as the result of this opposition that the decree was rescinded, and private stations continue to broadcast news and programs of political discussion.

Central Bank Reveals Forged U.S., Saudi Currency

NC0512120995 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic
1 Dec 95 p 9

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Central Bank of Lebanon has sent banks and money changers in Lebanon circular no. 463, which contains a copy of

a letter from the Internal Security Forces. [passage omitted] The letter contains copies of:

—A forged U.S. 50 dollar banknote number B12522575A.

—A forged Saudi 500 riyal banknote number 501090.

—A forged U.S. 100 dollar banknote number A63589096A.

—A forged U.S. 100 dollar banknote number B52706638G.

—A forged Saudi 500 riyal banknote number 141/949845.

—A forged U.S. 100 dollar banknote number B78711915C.

—A forged Saudi 500 riyal banknote number 5/233881.

—A forged Saudi 500 riyal banknote number 12/4234510. [passage omitted]

Police Uncover Narcotics Ring, Arrest Members

NC0512094195 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic
29 Nov 95 p 8

[Report by Faris Khashshan]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Internal Security Forces, under the direct supervision of Chief Public Prosecutor Judge 'Adnan 'Addum, have uncovered one of the biggest narcotics rings in Lebanon, whose activity extended to the United States. The ring, which had links with other rings recently uncovered in Lebanon, used beautiful women in smuggling operations. Judge 'Addum referred all the defendants to the Chief Public Prosecutor's office in Jabal Lubnan for legal measures to be taken against them.

Syrian national Faysal 'Antabi, who served a five-year jail term in the United States on drug trafficking charges, was arrested recently. Judge 'Addum ordered that the investigation of him be expanded and this led to uncovering the ring. His half-sister Basimah Yasin, who worked for drug dealer Zahi Mashshik, was arrested. Police also arrested Rana Khuri, wife of Faysal 'Antabi, however, no incriminating evidence was found against her and she was released on bail. 'Antabi carried a forged Syrian passport in the name of Ibrahim Sabbagh.

This ring and other rings used women who smuggled heroin and cocaine in tubes hidden in their genitals. They also used forged passports and contacted government officials to facilitate their work.

Judge 'Addum ordered the arrest of Basimah Yasin, 'Atif Shuhaytali, Janet Oklo, Amirah al-Dayikh, Ilyas Salih, Ghassan Ma'ushi, Sa'dallah al-Hajj Hasan, Muhammad Mansur, and Hasan Hijazi, who secured forged passports for the women. He also ordered the arrest of Olga Sulayman.

Judge 'Addum also issued arrest warrants against Zahi Mashshik, Hadi Mashshik, Hasan Dahir, Fadi al-Atat, Fawwaz al-Atat, 'Imad al-Siba'i, As'ad al-Siba'i, 'Ali al-'Ali, Zayd Isma'il, Isma'il Isma'il, Hasan al-Harakah, Faysal 'Antabi, Wadi' al-Hani, Zaynab Husayn, Zaynab Mubarak, and Is'af 'Abbas. He released Rana Khuri and Joseph 'Abbud on bail for lack of evidence.

Investigation showed that the women used deception methods, such hiding suitcases containing drugs in the safe deposit boxes of the hotels in which they were staying.

Dennis Ross Arrives in Damascus

JN0512061595 *Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace process, arrived in Damascus last night on a visit to Syria.

He was received at Damascus International Airport by Walid al-Mu'allim, Syria's ambassador in Washington; several Foreign Ministry staff; and Christopher Ross, U.S. ambassador in Damascus, and his Embassy staff.

Said To Bring Bid To Raise Level of Talks

JN0512073495 *Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dennis Ross arrived in Damascus last night from Israel amid Syrian expectations of what the U.S. coordinator of the peace process is carrying in terms of new Israeli or U.S. ideas to thaw the ice that coats the Syrian-Israeli track.

Informed sources stress that Syrian officials will reiterate to Ross Syria's adherence to peace as a strategic option, provided that this peace is based on a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for ordinary ['adiyah] peace relations. Syria will also reaffirm to Ross its support of all forms of Lebanese resistance, since this resistance was the result of occupation, and not vice versa.

According to Western sources, Ross is bringing with him an Israeli proposal to raise the level of negotiations and to open another channel besides the one that exists between the two ambassadors in Washington. Israel considers the latter an auxiliary, not an essential channel.

At any rate, Damascus, which will reaffirm to Ross its rejection of the ground warning stations, will also demand a public Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Press Previews Visit

JN0312123195 *Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 3 Dec 95*

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial entitled "The Strategic Option," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: Inasmuch as peace is Syria's strategic option, its agreed bases as part of the Madrid formula — namely, the faithful implementation of the UN and international legitimacy resolutions and the land-for-peace principle

— are the strategic pillars of Syria's way of dealing with this process in the past, at present, and in the future.

AL-BA'TH notes that events and developments throughout the past four years have confirmed that any Israeli attempt to violate or circumvent these bases will not achieve any result. On the contrary, such attempts will increase the obstacles and difficulties facing the peace process and threaten it with collapse.

The paper asserts that Syria's commitment to the peace option is very clear. Syria has exerted every possible sincere and constructive effort to achieve the set objectives of the peace process; namely, a just and comprehensive peace which will remove all traces of occupation, aggression, and injustice, and give everyone his dues in full.

AL-BA'TH adds: In return, however, Israel has pursued an intransigent and provocative policy designed to achieve its special, distorted, and incomplete peace with the aim of entrenching occupation, continuing to reap the fruit of its aggression, and spreading its political and economic hegemony and control in the Arab homeland.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: All means of pressures and threats will not prompt Syria and Lebanon to make any concession that could undermine one iota of their national rights and full sovereignty over their occupied territories. Israel's withdrawal from these territories should be complete, without leaving behind any trace of occupation.

In its editorial, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH discusses the upcoming tour of special U.S. coordinator Dennis Ross. It says: There has been nothing new apart from the announcement of a new U.S. move in the region by Ross in the next few hours to explore ways to activate the peace process on the Syrian track and acquaint himself with the true situation and with the Israeli proposals in this regard.

AL-THAWRAH adds: There has been nothing new so far from the Israeli side. Therefore, these proposals depart from the Syrian assertions at the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean conference and from its constant assertions about its commitment to a just and comprehensive peace and the constants of the Madrid conference, which are based on the Security Council resolutions in accordance with the land-for-peace principle and withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories to the 4 June 1967 lines.

AL-THAWRAH believes that Israel's unconvincing remarks about peace were remarks it had to make for purposes of maneuvering, propaganda, deception, and removal of embarrassment. These remarks were coupled with a deliberate, serious military escalation in southern

Lebanon in which various types of internationally-banned weapons were used against densely-populated villages. Israel's remarks were crystal-clear messages to the international community and to the parties interested in the peace process, led by the U.S. cosponsor, that the only peace Israel will agree to is the peace that Israel wants, that achieves its expansionist ambitions, and that serves and entrenches the Israeli occupation.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that wagering on force as a way to impose peace will not yield results. This is a costly and catastrophic wager that will have long-term consequences. It is therefore not in anyone's interest. It should be clear to all that we in Syria, as part of our policy and quest for peace, are in a strong position and do not fear anyone.

The paper adds: We have rights, and our demands are just and in harmony with the resolutions of international legitimacy. Any attempt to circumvent the substance of peace and the Syrian constants is a kind of tampering. The full return of the Golan and southern Lebanon, a comprehensive Israeli withdrawal, and the implementation of the international resolutions are the necessary prelude and condition for peace. This condition cannot be compromised or bargained over.

In its editorial, the newspaper TISHRIN also discusses Dennis Ross's tour, which will start tomorrow. It says: While, following all these moves and statements regarding the possibility of activating the Syrian track, and while Syria welcomes any honest, sincere, and positive effort to save the peace process from the stumbling blocks, obstacles, and stalemate to which it was subjected in the past months, we must clarify one basic and important fact. Syria has always been open to all initiatives and endeavors aimed to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

TISHRIN adds: On this basis, Syria responded to the efforts made to convene the Madrid conference. The paper notes that Syria has emphasized that peace has been, and will continue to be, its strategic option, and that it welcomed every proposal, position, and opinion which seeks peace. Syria has also taken a clear position on every proposal which does not guarantee the achievement of a comprehensive peace. Syria has nothing to conceal or use as a cover for any reason or consideration away from the peace process framework.

TISHRIN continues: From this premise, Syria has explained that a just and comprehensive peace is not impossible to achieve. Such a peace only needs practical positions as well as a real and genuine Israeli commitment to the requirements of peace, which should be

translated on the ground in accordance with a firm link [talazum wathiq] between full and comprehensive withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon on the one hand, and the setting up of equal [mutasawiyah], parallel [mutawaziyah], and equitable [mutakafi'ah] security arrangements on both sides of the 4 June 1967 lines on the other.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: While renewing its interest and endeavors to push the peace process forward, Syria does not have the least doubt that among the simplest components of peace is the complete removal of Israeli occupation from the occupied Arab territories.

Minister Views Status of Syria-Israel Track

MM0112141595 London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH
in Arabic Dec 95 pp 27-28

[Interview with Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, by Ghayyath Nasir in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Nasir] What is the true situation on the Syrian-Israeli track?

[Qaddur] It could be said that for the past four years, that is since the Madrid Conference, no progress at all has been made on the Syrian track. If anything has been achieved, however, it lies in the following two points:

First: The entire world, headed by Israel, has come to realize full well that we would not accept one inch of our land remaining under occupation.

Second: The world and Israel have come to realize that there can be no peace without Syria.

These are the only two things that have been achieved. Other than that, no progress was achieved at the level of talks because the Israelis always tried to dodge the essence and dues of peace.

[Nasir] What constitutes peace in your opinion?

[Qaddur] Peace consists of three elements: Withdrawal...security arrangements...then the method of peace.

But as soon as the word withdrawal arises, Israel develops an acute allergy to the word withdrawal and immediately jumps to another element: some withdrawal...withdrawal in...but the words "withdrawal from" never seem to exist in their vocabulary.

They then speak of their security apprehensions...and consequently they want to move to the discussion of security arrangements; once they feel reassured that there will be no surprise offensive from these strategic

heights (Golan), then they will discuss the question of withdrawal.

I recall that the Syrian chief of staff had one meeting only in Washington with the Israeli chief of staff, which lasted for seven hours and ended without producing any results. They said at the time that [Israeli Chief of Staff] Baraq was about to abandon his military work and seek a political future, that this was why he adopted a very rigorous stand, and that his successor would be more flexible. A second meeting took place. But prior to that, agreement was reached on what was called an "Understanding on Concepts," in which Syria affirmed that the security arrangements must be equal, balanced, and similar on both sides of the 4 June 1967 line.

[Nasir] Then why all this Israeli insistence on meeting with the Syrians and their spreading of rumors about the achievement of progress on the Syrian-Israeli track?

[Qaddur] Lately Israel has been seeking a meeting just for the sake of meeting and negotiations for the sake of negotiations, not for the sake of achieving any results. It used to imply to others that matters were progressing well on the Syrian track. Even Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] has made statements in this vein, that the Syrian-Israeli agreement has already been written and is only awaiting signing and that what has been taking place is no more than mere tactics.

Israel wants these meetings to continue in order to achieve further normalization with the other Arab countries.

[Nasir] How do you envisage the future of the peace process following Rabin's assassination?

[Qaddur] Our issue is not with Rabin personally or anyone else, for that matter. It is with a Zionist plan which has its designs and objectives...there is a Zionist plan operating in accordance with methods which appear sometimes flexible and sometimes inflexible, though in the final analysis they are the faces of one coin, a smooth face and a rough face like the edge of the saw. But in the end it is the same coin.

They say now in the press that Rabin's assassination might strengthen the antipeace camp and lead to greater fanaticism. But I wish to ask: Who created this fanaticism? Perhaps Rabin's assassination will teach them a lesson and make them see things clearly.

[Nasir] What about the future of the peace process?

[Qaddur] The Syrian leadership has affirmed that it will pursue the peace process with seriousness and determination. If the Israeli Government would show such seriousness and determination, then the peace process could witness positive developments leading to its de-

sired objectives, namely the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace that returns the land, gives everyone his rights, and guarantees security for all, a peace that is based on the principles of international legitimacy, the UN resolutions which provide for withdrawal from the Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 borders, and the implementation of UN Resolution No. 425 which pertains to withdrawal from Lebanon.

[Nasir] Do you expect American pressure to be brought to bear on Peres to make him return to the negotiating table?

[Qaddur] I must make a correction here and say that most regrettably the opposite is the truth. For it is Israel that is exerting pressure [on the United States]. When matters touch upon people's most sacred things and their homelands and become a commodity in the market of American elections, how can we imagine that these people could exert pressure on Israel.

We could expect such pressure to take place when the Arabs unite and take a unified stand. We must look for common factors. These common factors are now the subject of discussion and debate. For this reason, I cannot imagine at all that the U.S. Administration, even if it could, would exert pressure on Israel.

[Nasir] You have spoken of the U.S. Congress' decision to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. What effect, in your opinion, will this have on the peace process?

[Qaddur] Syria has announced its official position on this matter, which is the holiest of holies, and affirmed its strong objection to this decision because it constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of international law and UN resolutions on Jerusalem, particularly the UN Security Council resolutions which successive American administrations have adhered to and which considered Israel's decision to annex Jerusalem as legally null and void. It is indeed very surprising to see the American Congress, being an American legislative authority...adopt a resolution which conflicts with the resolutions of international legitimacy just to please Israel and to achieve domestic electoral gains.

In this regard, Syria would like to remind the American Administration, in its capacity as a peace process sponsor, of the guarantees it presented to Syria on the eve of the Madrid Peace Conference that the United States would not recognize Israel's decision to annex the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem.

We hope that the United States will continue to honor its pledge and prove its credibility and thus refrain from implementing the Congress decision and from injuring the feelings and rights of millions of Arabs, both Muslims and Christians.

[Nasir] In your opinion, did the Arab participation in eulogizing Rabin help to bolster the peace process?

[Qaddur] Even if we assume that the Arabs who participated in eulogizing Rabin did so with good intentions, I doubt that this will bolster the peace process, so much as consecrate Zionist hegemony.

Talas: Israelis 'No Longer Innocent' in World Eyes
MM0512114595 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT
in Arabic 4 Dec 95 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Syrian Defense Minister: No Middle East Peace Without Peace with Syria and Lebanon"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Syrian Defense Minister General Mustafa Talas yesterday visited the Zgharta area in northern Lebanon to present his condolences to former Lebanese President Sulayman Franjiah's widow on behalf of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. After the visit, Talas said: "We in Syria have a high opinion of this nationalist home and still consider President Sulayman Franjiah a national figure, not only in Lebanon but also in the Arab homeland as a whole."

He added: "History cannot forget that President Franjiah was the one who went to the United States to relay the decision of the [Arab] League and the Arab presidents' summit that the PLO was the representative of the Arab Palestinian people." Referring to the military escalation in southern Lebanon, Talas added: "Every time the date of the negotiations draws near, Israel tries to escalate the situation in the south in order to secure a position of strength in the negotiations. I do not believe that Syria and Lebanon are unaware of this ploy; on the contrary, they know it very well, and we are forging ahead with defending our natural right. There will be no genuine peace without Lebanon or Syria."

Talas stressed that Syria accepts the decisions of international legitimacy for a complete withdrawal from the all the areas in the south and the Golan, a comprehensive peace, and comprehensive relations, and does not accept any obstructions or conditions.

He said that "if peace is not achieved with Syria and Lebanon, the peace process will stumble." He added that the forthcoming Ross visit to the region is for the purpose of discussing the negotiations.

He stressed that "Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin's assassination has revealed to the international community that terrorism, which they associate with Arabs in general and Syrians and Lebanese in particular, comes from within Israel.

"Two years ago the attack on the worshippers in the al-Ibrahimi mosque took place, and 50 hours after the incident there was a reaction here in Lebanon in the form of a bombing in a church, to show that in Lebanon also a church could be bombed. Thank God, however, it was revealed that the perpetrators were three Israelis and three people from the occupied southern region.

"The whole world was then able to see that Israel was behind the bombing in Sayidat al-Najat church, and thus the whole world discovered Israeli terrorism...."

"Rabin's assassination by an Israeli extremist has proved to the world that the roots of international terrorism are in Israel and that it was the Israelis who, by their own admission, assassinated (international mediator) Dag Hammarskjold, and Rabin who assassinated al-Shaqaqi.

"Therefore, the stigma of terrorism with which they branded us is now associated them and with the Israeli extremists who live in their midst. Consequently, the international community will condemn this action, and Israelis are no longer innocent but have become the terrorists."

He added: "Resistance is a national legitimate right against any form of occupation, and if Lebanon had abided by the 17 May agreement it would have become an Israeli protectorate, as is the case with the Jericho agreement and the Oslo agreement and the Wadi 'Arabah agreement.

"We reject these agreements and do not accept them in Syria or in Lebanon."

Press: No Peace Without Full Israeli Withdrawal

JN0212095895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 2 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "No Peace Before Full Withdrawal," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says in one of its commentaries: Political and diplomatic circles concerned with developments in the region are expecting the next few days to witness visits and meetings which may lead to the resumption of the talks emanating from the peace process concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. This process has been stalled for over six months now on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks because of Israel's stubbornness and refusal to acknowledge the bases and requirements of just and comprehensive peace. Political and diplomatic circles concerned with the region's crisis are building their expectations on the deliberations and contacts that took place in several places, especially the efforts that have been carried out and are being carried out with

the concerned parties to end the stalemate in the peace process. The paper urges Israel to give up its elusive, delaying, and deceptive tactics and to acknowledge the bases and requirements of just and comprehensive peace, especially full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, at the forefront of which are the Golan and southern Lebanon.

AL-THAWRAH says: As everybody knows, particularly the EU and the cosponsors of the peace conference, especially the United States, Syria has shown extreme concern about the peace process. Syria made it clear that it is interested in the continuation of the peace process so as to achieve its aspired objective, which is a just, comprehensive peace. Peace was and still is Syria's strategic option. On the other hand, the Israeli side failed to declare its commitment to the bases and requirements of peace and gave no signal that it wants to achieve peace.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says that Syria made it clear once and again in front of the entire international community and the world public opinion that a just, comprehensive peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without Israel's full withdrawal from the entire Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines and from southern Lebanon and without recognizing the Palestinian Arab people's legitimate rights.

In its editorial, TISHRIN comments on the continued Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon. It says that the Israeli occupiers can have no peace of mind without creating further tragedies for the Lebanese citizens. If the resistance men respond to the daily attacks and inflict casualties among the occupiers, the Israeli officials go crazy and begin to issue threats and level charges, with some of them demanding large-scale military operations against Lebanon.

TISHRIN adds: More dangerously, the Israeli Government hastens to hold Lebanon and Syria responsible for the incidents, as if the governments of the two countries are responsible for protecting the occupation and repressing those who resist it. It is universally acknowledged that Israel is responsible first and foremost for all that is taking place. Israel is occupying Lebanese territory with force and fire. It seized part of Lebanon to establish in it an army of agents whose first mission is to terrorize citizens in southern Lebanon and force them to leave their homes.

TISHRIN reviews Israel's daily land, air, and sea aggressions against southern Lebanon. The paper says that since the Madrid conference Israel has been refusing to honor UN Security Council Resolution 425 providing for the unconditional withdrawal of its invading troops. The paper says while stalling the peace talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, Israel has so far failed to make

any commitment to fully withdraw from the occupied Syrian and Lebanese territories in implementation of the bases of the peace process and the land-for-peace principle.

TISHRIN asks: Are the lives of the Lebanese citizens who are daily killed by Israeli bullets worthless? Are only Israeli lives valuable? The paper continues: Israel will never be able to deny the Lebanese citizens' right to resist the occupation. This is a sacred right exercised by all peoples plagued with occupation.

Concluding, TISHRIN says that nothing damages peace more than occupation. Through their daily aggressive practices, the occupation forces block any appropriate circumstances for a peace breakthrough in the region. Like their Syrian brothers, the Lebanese want nothing but the restoration of their territory and rights. To show the least signs of creditability, Israel should be committed to full withdrawal, the evacuation of its troops, and the restoration of the territories to their owners, however, we have heard nothing of this sort from any Israeli official.

Radio Reiterates Country's Peace Stand

JN0212151995 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 2 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Given the clarity of the relevant international legitimacy resolutions, which constituted the terms of reference of the peace process and the bedrock of the U.S. initiative, the wasting of four years since the inception of the peace process is deemed strange and outlandish, particularly since Syria has been extremely clear in its favorable response to these resolutions, and also to the international efforts, particularly those made by the Americans, aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace that would restore the territories and rights to their lawful owners, safeguard the dignity and interests of all, and provide security and stability to all peoples in the region and the world at large.

For the international resolutions 242, 338, and 425 clearly provide for complete Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in the June 1967 aggression and the March 1978 incursion into Lebanon. Moreover, these resolutions reiterate the inadmissibility of the acquisition of others' territory by force. The peace initiative basically aimed to implement these resolutions. The key to peace lies in complete withdrawal in exchange for full peace. Right now, those far and near have become well aware that Syria has always been a catalyst for peace. For it was Syria which decided to pursue peace, opened

the doors wide for the convocation of the Madrid conference, and safeguarded the peace process despite the continuous Israeli provocations. It adhered to the peace opportunity despite Israeli intransigence, which was about to thwart this opportunity on several occasions, particularly after Israel reached partial agreements and separate deals with some Arab sides — agreements and deals that do not promote the cause of just and comprehensive peace. Everybody has become well aware that it was Israel which purposely placed obstacles, set traps, and frustrated efforts by setting impossible conditions that did not fall in line with the efforts to achieve true peace and that did not harmonize with the international community's wishes in this regard.

Thus, Israel has persisted in its endeavors to thwart peace efforts. As a matter of fact, Israel has never contemplated complete withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. However, successive upheavals and surprises have prompted Israeli officials to reconsider their positions. Nonetheless, we should remain cautious. For, throughout the peace process, Israeli officials have continued to make comforting statements to invoke deceptive optimism in order to blackmail their interlocutors on some tracks of the negotiations, embarrass Syria, and hold it responsible for the faltering in the peace talks. But despite the great haziness caused by statements and counter-statements and the sending of conflicting Israeli signals, Israeli officials are well aware that if they are really pursuing just and comprehensive peace, as they claim, then all they have to do is to drop their impossible conditions, subscribe to complete withdrawal, and accept equitable [mutakafi'ah], equal [mutasawiyah], and parallel [mutawaziyah] security arrangements. This alone would open the road for serious and constructive talks to achieve the desired peace under even [muta'adilah] arrangements that would bring about security for all without undermining sovereignty.

Syria has repeatedly emphasized its sincere desire for a true and honorable peace that would restore the territories and rights to their lawful owners and bring security and stability to all. Moreover, the entire world community has realized that peace is the antithesis of occupation and aggression. Consequently, Israel has to dismantle all manifestations of occupation and aggression if progress in the efforts to achieve just and comprehensive peace is to be made. This is the fact that cannot be overlooked, and these are the requirements of peace.

Radio Reiterates Position on Achieving Peace

JN0412160995 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1234 GMT 4 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Despite the current dormancy in the peace process due to the intransigent Israeli positions, Syria is still eager to keep its doors open to peace when Israel decides to stop the maneuvers and altercations and shows honest readiness to sincerely proceed on the straight path of peace avoiding trickery, twisted ways, and rugged roads.

No doubt, Syria's position continues to be crystal-clear. Likewise, Syria's interest in peace which is based on justice is beyond doubts or skepticism. However, peace can under no circumstances result from the desire of only one party to the conflict. For peace to come into being, it must result from the convergence of the wills of both parties to the conflict.

So far, there has only been the Syrian desire for peace, which is a clear and unambiguous desire. On the contrary, nothing has emerged from Israel except for talk, however, as soon as an Israeli statement provides some optimism over a possible end to the dormancy of the peace process, another statement by senior Israeli Government officials dashes this hope and confuses the belief that Israel can change its policy, depart from its methods, and abandon the language of threats which can only complicate matters and spread the specter of war in the region. This specter would also dash the glimpse of hope for reviving the peace process and making it proceed on the right path which will lead to a real, just, and balanced [mutawazin] peace.

Peace, however, cannot be real, just and balanced unless Israel withdraws to the 4 June 1967 borders on the Syrian front and to Lebanon's international borders that existed prior to the 1978 aggression.

Syria continues to emphasize its interest in peace, however, under no circumstances whatsoever will Syria be ready to accept a peace which is not an honest practical translation of Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and of the substance of the U.S. initiative which provides for exchanging land for peace.

In this regard, there is nothing clearer than President Hafiz al-Asad's remarks. He said: We want a just peace because we want stability for the region. We want the peace that returns the land to us. This is the peace which Syria believes in. Syria also believes in the starting points of this peace out of its care for peace. In a previous speech, President al-Asad expressed this idea by saying: I assert, as I asserted previously, that Syria

is aware of the importance of the peace that guarantees a comprehensive withdrawal. It is also aware of the fact that peace has its own objective requirements. Syria will meet the agreed objective requirements of peace.

Hence, the clear and frank Syrian position requires Israel to shoulder its responsibility toward peace in the region. Such peace does not permit various colors, so it is either black or white. In other words, either there will be a real peace or there will be no peace at all.

Dailies Blame Israel for Tension in Lebanon

JN0412124095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 4 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a comment entitled "The Role of Influential International Forces in the Peace Process," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: All political and media circles assert that the peace process is still marking time due to the policy which Israel has been pursuing since the inception of the peace process in Madrid in 1991. It has become clear that Israel does not want the peace which the world seeks, but an incomplete peace that has nothing to do with the real peace which should be established in the region.

The paper adds: It seems that Tel Aviv is convinced that the agreements it has concluded here and there will bring about security, peace, and stability, however, the truth is quite the opposite, because the state of anxiety still exists and is exacerbating due to the Israeli policy of aggression in southern Lebanon. Instead of implementing Resolution 425, Israel tends to exacerbate the situation, thus neglecting this resolution which demands its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from occupied southern Lebanon. Israel pursues an official policy of occupation, expansion, and establishing settlements at the expense of Arabs, as if the UN resolutions do not concern it in the least.

AL-BA'TH points out that Arabs in general, and Syria in particular, have asserted their commitment to international legitimacy and its resolutions in order to arrive at a real solution to the problem in the region. Moreover, Syria has exerted numerous efforts both regionally and internationally in a bid to arrive at a just and comprehensive peace in the region, however, Israel has always obstructed any attempt to establish genuine peace.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH wonders: How long will Israel continue to pursue its policy; and, what is the position of the influential international forces, which often speak about peace and its significance, toward this Israeli policy.

In its comment, the newspaper TISHRIN speaks about the Israeli aggression against southern Lebanon, which recently has turned into an open war arena into which Israeli occupation forces have plunged new types of weapons, rockets, and tanks as well as phosphoric and cluster bombs. The occupation forces have also declared a state of alert in order to expand the occupied part of southern Lebanon with the participation of the agent militias.

TISHRIN asserts that when Israel plans a large-scale aggression against southern Lebanon, it overlooks a significant and basic fact; namely, that the Lebanese national resistance has never been behind the aggravated and tense situation in the south. This situation is the result of occupation, aggression, and the provocative Israeli practices, therefore, any Israeli talk about an aggressive military retaliation against the Lebanese national resistance does not hold true before facts and realities. Had Israel wanted to calm down and defuse the explosive situation, it would have totally adhered to a real, serious, and immediate implementation of Resolution 425 which calls for unconditional end to the occupation of southern Lebanon.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Israel, which is responsible for the escalation in southern Lebanon and the consequences of its attacks, random shelling of villages and killing Lebanese citizens, cannot escape facing the outcome of its aggressive schemes, since the Lebanese national resistance has the right, or rather duty, to retaliate strongly and firmly using all available means backed by the Lebanese people, institutions, and army, to defend Lebanon and its national progress and protect its drive toward detente and peace.

The paper affirms that all international pacts and laws guarantee the right of the people under occupation to pursue the path of resistance in order to repel occupation.

Paper on Warning Stations, High-Level Talks

JN0512092695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 5 Dec 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH discusses the regional peace process and highlights Israel's intransigence and adherence to the provocative positions that have pushed the peace process to its current tight dilemma. The paper stresses that the whole world knows that Syria has offered all it can to render the peace process a success and help it arrive at its set objectives. Furthermore, Syria proved its good intentions and the sincerity of its trends. It

also proved beyond any doubt that peace is its firm strategic option, to which it is committed in word and deed, and through which it seeks to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that will ensure the liberation of all occupied Arab territories and return to each party its rights in full.

AL-BA'TH says: Israel has always taken an opposite stand. It is well known that Israel wants Syria to abandon its rights, as some other parties have done through their talks and separate agreements with Israel when they agreed to enter the labyrinth of secret talks, accepted early warning ground stations, and held high-level talks and discussions.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Israel will not obtain this now or in the future, regardless of all pressures and threats. Damascus will not relinquish a grain of its rights or the manifestations of its full national sovereignty over its occupied territory, which must be liberated without leaving any remnant of occupation. If Israel really seeks to render the current tour by Dennis Ross a success, then it must prove its good intentions and sincerity. It must also declare — clearly, candidly, and publicly — that it is committed to withdrawing from the occupied territory to the 4 June 1967 lines.

Paper Lauds Role in Barcelona Conference Results

JN0512095595 *Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic* 0545 GMT 5 Dec 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Editorializing on the Barcelona conference, TISHRIN says: The Barcelona conference, which concluded its meetings a few days ago, is considered one of the major and important political events that will have a manifold impact on the developments in the region. This conference is important because it has highlighted a new European stance vis-a-vis the Arab region based on an objective assessment of matters.

TISHRIN adds: Also, the Barcelona conference had another positive feature; namely, Europe's concern to draft its own policy, which is drawn in Europe itself, and which expresses the interests of its own people. The paper writes about the great efforts of Syria which

contributed to the conference's adoption of balanced decisions regarding the conflict in the region and economic and cultural relations with the Arab nation.

TISHRIN highlights the Barcelona declaration's reiteration of its participants' support for efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on the Security Council resolutions and the Madrid formula, including the principle of land for peace. The paper adds: The Barcelona conference adopted another important position, at Syria's initiative — namely, the right to resort to legitimate methods against the forcible acquisition of others' land. In practical terms, this means guaranteeing the right to resist the continuation of Israeli occupation of Arab territory. Syria's presence at the conference did not only reflect on the nature of the Barcelona resolutions, but also helped formulate an effective and weighty Arab position, which resulted in improving the results of the conference and in highlighting a firm fact — that is, withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon is the only way to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement in the region, and that there will be no peace without Syria.

TISHRIN notes that the Barcelona conference is different from the two [Middle East and North Africa, MENA] economic conferences, which were held in Morocco and Jordan. The objective of the Morocco and Jordan conferences was confined to accelerating normalization between the Arabs and Israel before achieving a just and comprehensive peace. Meanwhile, the real objective of the Barcelona conference is to discuss aspects of cooperation between the Arabs and Europe and to define the track of future partnership between the Mediterranean states.

Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN says: The Barcelona conference has laid down a solid basis for building and developing Arab-European relations that will reach the level of a real partnership based on equality and mutual respect. Also, this conference has rectified many European stands vis-a-vis the Arab homeland, restored consideration for the principles of just and comprehensive solution, and reiterated the importance of Europe's participation in providing the appropriate atmosphere for a real and comprehensive peace in the region.

Bangladesh

Commission Schedules General Elections 18 Jan
*BK0312154095 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network
in Bengali 1500 GMT 3 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] The Election Commission [EC] this evening announced the schedule for general elections to be held in the country on 18 January. It fixed 17 December as the date for submitting nomination papers to returning officers and assistant returning officers. The scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on 18 December. The last date for withdrawing nomination papers is 23 December.

Before announcing the election schedule, Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeq expressed the hope that all political parties will participate in the elections. He said the commission will ensure the holding of totally free and fair elections. The announcement said that following the dissolution of Parliament by the president on 24 November, it became a constitutional obligation to make arrangements to hold general elections within 90 days. The EC announced the schedule keeping in view the constitutional obligation and the fact that the holy month of Ramadan will begin in late January.

Meanwhile, the EC has announced the finalization of the code of conduct. Candidates and political parties must follow this code of conduct. The 34-point code of conduct comes into force with the announcement of the election schedule today. The EC has called upon the political parties and potential candidates to abide by the provisions of the code of conduct.

Opposition Condemns Poll Plan; Calls For Protest
*BK0412073395 Hong Kong AFP in English
0714 GMT 4 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Dec 4 (AFP) — The Bangladesh opposition strongly condemned the government's decision to call elections next month and vowed to pursue its campaign to bring down Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Home-made bombs were set off, two near the homes of ministers, and vehicles were damaged late Sunday [3 December] soon after the election was announced.

The opposition Awami League of Sheikh Hasina Wajed described the plan for elections on January 18 as a "deep conspiracy to hold voterless elections" by the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

"Elections under the BNP and getting burnt in the furnace of the hell are the same thing," Wajed told reporters.

The Awami League has announced new plans for anti-government demonstrations as part of its attempt to force Zia to stand down and let a caretaker government take the country to new polls.

Opposition parties plan protest rallies and meetings on Thursday and Friday ahead of a 72-hour general strike from Saturday. People will "resist" the polls unless they are held under a neutral government, an opposition statement said.

The Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami has called off plans to block train lines, roads and waterways during the strike but still plans a march on Zia's office on Thursday.

The dispute between the opposition and government is now in its 20th month. Opposition carried out a prolonged boycott of parliament before it was dissolved last month.

The election was announced after Wajed turned down a new written approach from the prime minister saying there was still time to end the impasse so all parties could take part in elections.

Newspapers speculated that Zia, who remained firm saying any solution to the crisis has to be within the constitution, might resign this month which could bring the opposition into the elections.

But BNP secretary-general Abdus Salam Talukder, without ruling out a "sudden" solution, said "the constitutional process cannot wait for anyone and the elections will go ahead even if the opposition stayed away."

Bangladesh's President Abdur Rahman Biswas has signed an ordinance barring bank defaulters from contesting the elections.

The ordinance also gave the election commission the authority to frame new rules to conduct free elections.

The ordinance came days after Bangladesh business leader Salman Rahman indicated he was planning to form a party to safeguard business interests. He reportedly plans to contest upcoming polls as an independent.

Rahman reportedly was among scores of Bangladeshi business and other professionals who have failed to repay their bank loans.

Left wing opposition groups who have long demanded that loan defaulters be barred from polls are now supported by major political groups.

The business community in turn asked for barring those who either evaded tax or had no "known source of earnings."

Radio Notes Steps To Hold Free, Fair Elections

BK0512063195 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 4 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Elections to the sixth parliament will be held on the 18th of next month. The date for the next general elections was announced yesterday by the Election Commission through a gazette notification. According to the schedule announced, the nomination papers are to be filed by the 17th of this month, while the scrutiny will be held on the 18th. The last date for the withdrawal of candidature has been fixed for the 23d of this month.

With the dissolution of the fifth parliament by the president on the 24th of last month, it became a constitutional obligation to hold the general elections within the next 90 days. Before announcing the election schedule for the sixth parliament, the chief election commission, Justice A.K.M. Sadeque, expressed the hope that all political parties would participate in the forthcoming polls. Meanwhile, a code of conduct to be followed by all candidates and the political parties in the coming parliamentary elections has been finalized. The 34-point code of conduct becomes effective with the announcement of the election schedule. Among other things, the code of conduct includes accountability of electioneering expenses by the candidates and limiting it to 300,000 taka each. An ordinance has also been passed by the president, debarring bank loan defaulters from contesting the elections.

The Election Commission is taking all measures to maintain law and order during the electioneering period and on the day of voting. The Election Commission has also taken steps to ensure neutrality of the administrative machinery who will be on the election duty. Measures have also been taken to ensure fair and equitable coverage of news of participating political parties and their projection of manifesto and electioneering campaign on the radio and television. The chief election commissioner has said he has set the election date before the month of Ramadan, considering the difficulties of the fasting people. The election commissioner has time and again said that the Election Commission is now totally geared up in a free, fair, and impartial way.

The importance of elections in a democratic dispensation needs hardly be exaggerated. Elections are the main strength of a healthy democratic order. It gives the people the privilege and the opportunity to elect leaders who can represent them in the parliament. The parliament is the voice of the people and it would always be the peo-

ple's expectation to elect the most suitable candidates to provide leadership to the nation. The next parliamentary elections once again give the scope for the country to march forward on the road to democracy.

Official Denies Aiding Indian 'Militant Groups'

BK0312090195 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 3 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bangladesh has denied the remarks made by director general of Border Security Force [BSF] of India that it is providing shelter and training to the Kashmiri and other militant groups. A senior Foreign Ministry official in Dhaka yesterday described the remarks as absurd and totally false. The BSF director general is also reported to have said that Bangladesh is inciting communal tension in the border areas and encouraging illegal movement of people into India. This has also been described by the official as malicious and totally baseless.

India**Minister Accuses U.S. of Kashmir 'Evil Designs'**

BK0412155395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister says legal action will be taken, if required, for holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Replying to a short duration discussion on the situation in the state in the Rajya Sabha today, Mr. S.B. Chavan said the Law Ministry is being consulted on the Election Commission's interpretation on the elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

He accused the United States of having some evil designs on Kashmir. Criticizing the Brown Amendment and the U.S. arms package to Pakistan, Mr. Chavan asked how the Clinton administration will certify that Islamabad has no nuclear capability. He said the government has conveyed its concern to the U.S. authorities on the issue. He said people in Pakistan should understand that such games by big powers will force the countries in the subcontinent to increase their defense expenditure, affecting developmental programs.

Responding to clarifications, Mr. Chavan said the government has no objection in holding talks with the opposition parties to evolve a national consensus on Kashmir. He urged the political parties to hold rallies in the valley to instill confidence among the people. Referring to the issue of change of nomenclature of governor and the chief minister in the state, the home minister said there is nothing new in the proposal and all political parties except the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] have accepted it. Not satisfied with the minister's reply, the BJP staged a walkout.

Government Rejects U.S. Mediation in Pakistan

*BK0512093895 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 0830 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has ruled out any third-party mediation, including by the United States, to resolve outstanding issues in Indo-Pakistan relations. The external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, told the Lok Sabha that New Delhi has categorically conveyed to the United States that all issues, including Kashmir, can only be resolved through bilateral dialogue under the Simla Agreement. In a written reply, he informed the house that the United States has expressed willingness to help India and Pakistan resume a dialogue for this purpose.

Kashmir Government Warns of Pakistan 'Machinations'

*BK0312094795 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 0830 GMT 3 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir Government has called upon the people to inform the administration if any youth is missing from their locality or village. A government spokesman said in Jammu this morning that the parents should ensure that their children do not fall prey to the machinations of Pakistan and avoid risk to the lives of their children. He said recently 53 boys being forcibly taken across the border were restored to their parents in the Kashmir Valley.

Al-Faran Reacts 'Angrily' to Rejection of Appeal

*BK0412125295 Hong Kong AFP in English
1241 GMT 4 Dec 95*

[By Izhar Wani]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Srinagar, India, Dec 4 (AFP) — A Muslim guerrilla group holding four Westerners in Kashmir since July reacted angrily on Monday [4 December] to the rejection of their appeal for fresh mediation to end the dragging hostage crisis.

The Al-Faran group flayed the All Party Hurriyat Conference, a forum of 30 Kashmiri political and rebel groups, for rejecting its request to open fresh talks with the Indian government to end the hostage crisis.

"If the Hurriyat is unable to mediate then they have no right to call themselves the champions of the Kashmiri cause," Al-Faran said of its demands for a swap of 15 of its jailed comrades for the four captive Western tourists.

The hardline separatist group called on the Hurriyat on Saturday to launch talks with the Indian mediators, but the umbrella forum of Kashmiri political parties and rebel groups turned down the appeal a day later on Sunday.

The Al-Faran said its top leaders were in a meeting on Monday to review the Hurriyat's stand on the hostage crisis, the longest of its nature in India's troubled Kashmir.

Al-Faran is holding Britons Paul Wells, 23, and Keith Mangan, 33, American Donald Hutchings, 42, and German Dirk Hasert, 26.

The four were kidnapped by Al-Faran in early July while they were trekking around Pahalgam. A fifth hostage, 27-year-old Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro, was beheaded by the militants in August by his captors.

"The Hurriyat (leaders) declined to mediate describing India as an oppressor, but on the other hand, they opened an office in New Delhi to enjoy their lives," the separatist group said.

"Keeping in view their rejection of our appeal, the Hurriyat (now) has no right to appeal for the release of the hostages..." the Al-Faran said in a statement given to AFP in Srinagar.

The guerrilla group on Saturday said the four hostages were well but added that twice Indian soldiers encircled them leading to a firefight, which left two of its members dead.

"Since their abductions we have kept them (hostages) as our honoured guests. We ourselves have suffered hunger and thirst but (we) always took care of our foreign guests," Al-Faran said in its weekend statement.

"Keeping all these things in view we cannot keep the foreigners safe for a long time," it said in its first-ever appeal to the umbrella forum to open negotiations with New Delhi, which directly administers Kashmir.

Al-Faran's contacts with Indian negotiators have petered out with both sides refusing to budge from their stands.

New Delhi refuses to release jailed Al-Faran militants in a swap saying the move would be seen as a precedent by Muslim separatist militants campaigning for an end to Indian rule in Kashmir, which borders Pakistan. [passage omitted]

Rao Stresses Need for Further Economic Reforms

*BK0512104895 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 0830 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister says the economy is poised for a quantum jump. Opening the annual session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry [FICCI] in New Delhi today, Mr. Narasimha Rao said agriculture and industry, especially the small-scale sector, have responded well to the new economic policy. He said 500,000 new

jobs were created by small-scale industries last year. Admitting the need for further reforms in the financial sector, he said the process has already started with the setting up of regulatory authorities. Mr. Rao said the government is in touch with the Supreme Court for making appropriate changes in the industrial law to make it in tune with the new economic policies.

Reaffirming the need for the reforms to have a human face, the prime minister said its success will be judged by the benefits it gives to the poor. Appreciating the FICCI's offer to spend 1 percent of project cost on social welfare, Mr. Rao said the industry should cooperate with the government in social improvement. The FICCI president said the industry pledges to use a portion of the project cost for extending social services to the community surrounding the new units. He said the industry will concentrate on vocational training, education and health.

Prospects for Expansion of PRC Ties Viewed

*BK0112115795 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 1010 GMT 1 Dec 95*

[Commentary by M.K. Dhar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The peace and tranquillity prevailing along the rugged India-China border, thanks to the statesmanship of the leaders of the two countries, serious efforts are now being made to improve the quality of and also to expand the mutual relations in trade, economic, cultural, and scientific and technological fields. A series of high-level visits from China this year point to the desire of the Chinese leadership to develop more extensive contacts in several spheres with the world's second most populous nation as also its largest democracy. It is realized that the two countries have a lot to learn from each other despite the different political systems, as both have embarked on economic liberalization to improve the living standards of their people.

The recent Indian visit by Mr. Qiao Shi, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the third highest ranking Chinese leader, gave the necessary impetus to expansion of relations between the two countries. He spoke of the historical and abiding nature of the Sino-Indian relations and pointed out that the time had come to exploit the full potential of their economies for mutual benefit. His visit was followed by that of the Chinese education minister, Mr. Zhu Kaixuan, who is here for exchange of ideas with educationists to learn more about the Indian experience in higher and technical education. He will also share his experience of China's educational reform to suit the socialist market economy. The immensity of the task is borne out by the fact that the rate of literacy in

China is only 15 percent, with compulsory education assured, enrollments in schools have gone up to 98.5 percent. The development of vocational education, too, has been rapid. Mr. Zhu's visit will be followed in the next few weeks by those of the Chinese mining minister, Mr. Wang; Vice Chairperson of the Chinese Political Consultative Committee Madam Qian; and vice minister of public security.

The two countries have already signed a number of agreements to broad-base their relations and time has now come to speed up implementation. The potential for increasing trade further, given the size and strength of the Indian and the Chinese economies remains vast. Cooperation is envisaged in the fields of banking, coal, petroleum, medicine, civil aviation, and administration. India, China, and South Korea have already signed a memorandum of understanding for the manufacture of a 100-seater passenger aircraft. This will be the first South-South venture by the two Asian giants in the high-tech area of aircraft manufacture and the product is expected to be operational by the turn of the century. The \$2 billion project is a landmark in the Asian aviation industry.

Liberalization of the Chinese economy has brought in its wake a host of problems, some of which also afflict Western society. China is having problems of accounting, auditing, banking, administrative procedures, corruption, misuse of import-export procedures, and organized crime. The discussions with the leaders visiting India shortly are expected to focus on some of these problems. With most state enterprises having been privatized, the problem of maintaining production with the cooperation of workers is being squarely addressed. China wants in place a whole set of labor laws for proper conduct of labor relations to provide job and social security and to ensure higher production through incentives. The basic transformation of the Chinese economy needs to be guided by a certain discipline and set of laws and independent and responsive judiciary to achieve higher growth.

Several Chinese leaders and officials have come to India recently to study the country's financial and administrative procedures and laws, banking, and stock exchanges. India has shown interest in Chinese mining technology and the coal minister is expected to discuss the question of supplying deep coal mining machinery which India needs. Madam Qian is a senior politician and is also president of the India-China Friendship Association. Her efforts will be strengthening people-to-people contact.

India and China have been taking identical stand on many international issues affecting the economic and

political security of developing countries which are being subjected to pressures on human rights and intellectual property rights fronts. On Kashmir, China fully supports the Indian position of bilateralism and is against internationalizing the issue. India and China are working for the establishment of long-term, stable, expanded, and good- neighborly relations.

Japanese Companies Said Interested in West Bengal
BK0512110095 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
in English 2 Dec 95 p 15

[Article by Tapan Das: "Japanese MNC's Keen on JV's With West Bengal"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several Japanese leading multinational concerns [MNC] including Mitsubishi, Marubeni and Sumitomo are now having discussions with many West Bengal private sector companies for setting up joint ventures in the State [said] Mr Bidyut Ganguly, minister of commerce and industry.

Addressing a 12-member study team from the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry and the study group on Indian economy from Japan, Mr Ganguly said that the West Bengal is also very keen to promote joint venture industries in several key sectors, the infrastructural sphere in particular.

The State Government is also keen to participate in these ventures by even taking up some equity stakes despite the severe resource crunch, he added.

The minister further stated that the State Government will not only provide land for such projects on a priority basis but would also do its best to get clearances from the Central Government within the shortest possible time.

Mr Kazuo Kaneko, leader of the delegation, informed that the team would make a detailed report to the Japanese Government on its return identifying the areas in which West Bengal has lucrative potentials for mutual benefit.

The Japanese delegation would also seriously consider a request from the WBIDC [West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation] to launch an air service by the Japanese airlines between Calcutta and Tokyo, he disclosed.

Air Traffic Resumed With Burma After 2 Decades
BK0412160795 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 1530 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Air traffic between India and Myanmar [Burma] is being restored after a gap of two decades. Indian Airlines will, for the first time in

the recent years, introduce Calcutta-Yangon [Rangoon] biweekly flights from Thursday [7 December]. It will be available on every Thursday and Sunday.

Radio Sees Air Links Promoting Democracy
BK0512052495 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 0245 GMT 5 Dec 95

[Commentary by Bhaskar Roy of INDIAN EXPRESS]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At a time when the hitherto closed societies are opening up, adopting the principle of democracy, Myanmar [Burma] has remained insulated. The military junta that rules that country has shown an imperviousness to the democratic aspirations of the people by not stepping down. Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, the celebrated leader of the country's pro-democracy movement who got a clear mandate from the voters in an election in 1990, is still being denied her due role in deciding the destiny of the nation. Her party, the National League for Democracy, had to pull out of the constitutional convention a few days back under pressure from the junta.

Against this depressing backdrop, the news of resumption of regular air services between India and Myanmar after many years has come as a whiff of a fresh air. The reestablishment of the air links between Calcutta and Yangon [Rangoon] is sure to work as an influence on the Myanmar authorities. The exposure to the functioning of a free democratic society is likely to go a long way in restoring the democratic process in the neighboring country. Closer communications will bring under sharp focus the contrast between the army rule and a vibrant democracy.

Indeed, India has played a quiet but important role in the process of restoring democracy in Burma. Both countries have much in common. Apart from the shared history of a prolonged struggle against the colonial rule, the Buddhist philosophy has permeated both countries. Ms. Suu Kyi, who has close personal links with India, has been deeply influenced by the Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence. At moments of trials and tribulations, this fearless warrior of peace has successfully put to practice the Mahatma's principles of moral courage and nonviolence.

India has responded to the situation in Myanmar with responsibility. While pressure was brought on the Yangon regime to free Ms. Suu Kyi from detention, India also looked into the economic problems facing the neighboring country. Border trade has recently begun between the two countries at a place that would benefit the people in the northeast as well as those on the other side of the border. Now that the bastions of totalitarianism

have fallen to the tidal wave of democracy, one hopes Myanmar, too, will embrace democracy without further delay.

Iran

UN Move on Jerusalem Discussed; U.S. Criticized

NC0512100795 *Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian*
0445 GMT 5 Dec 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Most UN General Assembly members yesterday declared that a 15-year-old Israeli law proclaiming Jerusalem as the country's capital was illegal. Jerusalem, which was occupied by Zionist forces in two wars—in 1948 and in 1967—was proclaimed the country's capital by the Tel Aviv parliament in 1980. However, the governments with embassies in Tel Aviv were not prepared to recognize this proclamation and move their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem, especially when the United Nations and international forums consider this city as occupied.

Within the framework of their aggressive and expansionist policies that are aimed at strengthening the foothold of Zionist presence in Jerusalem, on the one hand Tel Aviv rulers began international efforts to convince, their close allies at least, to move their embassies to Jerusalem and, on the other hand, they adopted a policy to Judaize the city, resorted to various inhuman methods, and confiscated the land and houses of Palestinian Muslims, most of whom live in East Jerusalem. The occupying Zionist regime continues to persist with these two methods.

Last month, the U.S. Congress approved a bill under which the U.S. Government should move its embassy in occupied Palestine from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by 1999. This step by the United States, which blatantly conflicts with UN resolutions that consider Jerusalem to be under occupation, sparked a wave of rage and animosity among Muslims in the Islamic world. Also, not only did the United States' European allies not imitate this decision, but they more or less criticized it as well.

Now, with the approval of most of the countries in the UN General Assembly, the true identity of Jerusalem and the illegal decision by the Zionist regime to proclaim it the capital of the occupiers have been emphasized. Thus, the United States' support for the aggressive acts by the Tel Aviv rulers, their overt enmity to the Muslims, and their opposition with UN resolutions have become the target of criticism by political observers.

'Zionist Regime' Accused of 'Propaganda Campaign'

LD0312130195 *Tehran IRNA in English*
1224 GMT 3 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 3, IRNA — The Zionist regime has launched an all out propaganda campaign against Iran to push the Islamic republic towards a passive position and to claim that human rights were being violated in Iran, a Persian-language daily wrote in its editorial Sunday [3 December].

"Of course, the true nature of the enemies of Islam is clear to nations. Everyone knows that the enemies of Islam top the list of those who are enemies of humanity and who are violating the human rights.

"Who can forget America's blatant complicity in the crimes committed by the savage Serbs? Is there anyone who may be unaware of the criminal records of the U.S. in the four corners of the world?" JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI asked in its editorial.

The daily further referred to a visit of the rapporteur of the U.N. human rights commission to the Islamic republic, saying that it seemed that some of decision making centers in Iran have agreed to such a visit and have announced that Islamic Iran has no objection to the visit to Iran of a representative of the U.N. human rights commission.

Of course, those officials have reached the conclusion that since the Islamic Republic of Iran is quite sure of its clear stance and performance as regard the human rights, an honest and impartial survey (of its human rights record) would show its righteousness to the world, the daily said.

"But the Islamic republic's good intention and honesty in this regard is only one side of the coin. When the other party lacks good will and has in practice proved its grudge and malicious purposes from the very beginning, the visit of such delegations will not produce desirable results," the daily said.

JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI said that all evidences lend proof to this fact that the Zionist lobbies in the U.S. and Europe have launched a smear campaign against the Islamic republic so as to offer a distorted picture of human rights status in Iran.

Given the hands at work overtly and covertly to accuse Iran of human rights abuses, giving the new human rights rapporteur a free hand would be nothing but repetition of the past mistakes, the daily concluded.

Western Silence on Egyptian Elections Criticized

LD0312105995 *Tehran IRNA in English*
0915 GMT 3 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 3, IRNA — The West, particularly the United States which claims to be the champion of human rights and democracy, adopted a policy of silence on the exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood from the electoral process by the Mubarak regime, a morning daily wrote in its editorial Sunday [3 December].

"Mubarak serves the interests of the West and the Zionists at the expense of his own nation and other regional countries," the English-language IRAN NEWS said, adding that as long as this sort of regime continues, one should expect the armed struggle to continue.

Referring to the first round of voting for parliamentary seats in that country, it stated that in the last several years, Egypt has been a source of concern as the political turmoil there has often resulted in bloodshed.

Under such circumstances, it noted, in Egypt, Algeria or elsewhere, the democratic process is the only means to solve the problems faced by the masses who are ruled by dictators in the garb of democracy.

"The Mubarak regime, under different pretexts, closed the door for the entry of opposition parties into the country's political arena," the article stressed and even parties with mass appeal and large followings such as the al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood) were not allowed to participate in the polls.

"The fact is that Mubarak has very cleverly planned his own re-election by keeping his opponents away from the election process," it commented, adding in 1993, he was sworn in for his third term of presidency. He is now preparing himself for the fourth term, the daily noted.

But a presidential election, carried out under such circumstances, is only a deception and a hoax, the paper reiterated, remarking that political analysts believe that even a president-for-life is more acceptable than one who tries to pass himself off as a popular and legitimate head of state by systematically eliminating all legitimate opposition just before the voting is held.

A mock democratic process causes not only bloodshed but also political, economic and social uncertainty in any country, it said, "and this is what has been happening in Egypt since 1970 when Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir died and Anwar al-Sadat took the reigns in Cairo."

The daily concluded that when the democracy is denied to a nation, the genuine political parties will naturally resort to armed struggle.

Velayati Supports Convention on Chemical Weapons

LD0412121195 *Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian*
1030 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] As the biggest victim of the deployment of chemical weapons, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always called for a comprehensive convention [preceding word in English] for the destruction and prohibition of the deployment of chemical weapons as weapons of mass destruction.

Foreign Minister Velayati stressed this issue in a seminar on a chemical weapons convention which met in Tehran today. He said: Through its active participation in talks drafting the text of this convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran proved its scientific, technical, and political capabilities, and by signing the text of the convention, it demonstrated its political resolve for the total destruction of chemical weapons.

Radio Views Chemical Weapons Convention in Tehran

NC0512082495 *Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian*
0445 GMT 5 Dec 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] A seminar on a chemical weapons convention opened in Tehran yesterday. During the seminar, which was attended by Dr. Velayati, foreign minister and head of the Supreme National Council on the Chemical Weapons' Convention, and by Ne'matzadeh, minister of industries, the history of the use of chemical weapons against Iran and Iran's interest in the full implementation of the chemical weapons' convention were stated.

Velayati stated at the seminar that with its active participation in talks for the compilation of this convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran has proven its scientific, technical, and political capabilities, and by signing the text of the convention, it has expressed its political determination for the complete annihilation of chemical weapons.

Actually, it should be recalled that as one of the major victims of chemical weapons, Iran has always defended the need to limit and to annihilate such weapons in all countries of the world, hence its active participation in the compilation of the convention on chemical weapons. During the years of the Sacred Defense [Iran-Iraq war], 252 chemical attacks were carried out against Iran and about 9,000 people were killed in these attacks. These

were in addition to the attacks on Iraqi civilians [by Iraq].

When the world realized the consequences of the use of chemical weapons, favorable grounds were prepared to accelerate the compilation of the convention on banning the use, amassing, production, and proliferation of such arms. On the basis of this convention which was compiled three years ago and was signed by many countries; the proliferation, amassing, and use of chemical weapons are banned and the countries of the world should cooperate to annihilate these weapons. Of course, naturally this convention too—like all other international pacts—can be effective only if it is protected by sanctions and through cooperation among all the countries of the world, especially countries that have chemical weapons.

In relation to this it should be noted that the technology for the manufacture of chemical weapons, as well as the necessary raw materials for such weapons, first existed in the industrial countries and then infiltrated to the developing countries. In other words, control on the production and distribution of chemical weapons is one of the political responsibilities of the industrial countries more than anyone else, and the negligence and efforts to reap benefits by some political and economic factions in these countries have inflicted irreparable damages on the health of many innocent people. Meanwhile, more sensitivity should be displayed on the use of chemical weapons in order to grant the convention higher credibility. Also, the use of such weapons should be very carefully followed up and violators should be dealt with on the basis of the convention.

Tehran To Set Up Three 'Special Economic Zones'

*LD012173795 Tehran IRNA in English
1659 GMT 2 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kerman, Dec. 2, IRNA — The government has decided to set up three special economic zones in the southeastern, northern and northeastern parts of the country as part of measures to further boost the national economy, head of Iran's customs administration, 'Abdolhoseyn Vahhaji announced here on Saturday [2 December].

He said vast investments have already been made in the Sirjan industrial zone of Kerman province and the Anzali port on the Caspian sea, while the third such zone is to soon start its activities in the northeastern city of Sarakhs on the Turkmenistan border.

He added that industrialists, merchants and importers could avail the facilities to establish production units in these three areas.

Vahhaji also said that six provinces have so far announced their readiness to the customs administration for setting up such economic zones.

In the Persian Gulf, Iran has set free trade zones on the islands of Kish and Qeshm.

Larijani: Upcoming Majles Elections 'Big Test'

*LD0112150795 Tehran IRNA in English
1405 GMT 1 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Tehran, Dec. 1, IRNA — Substitute leader of Friday congregational prayers, Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani, expressed hope here Friday [1 December] that the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles) would slash unnecessary expenditures in the budget bill for the next year so that inflation might be curbed. [passage omitted]

Vice chairman of the foreign policy commission of the Majles Larijani was the pre-sermon speaker at the Friday congregational prayers who said that the forthcoming Majles elections in Iran was going to be a big test both to the electorate and to those who were to be elected.

Larijani said the Majles elections should prove an opportunity for improving the political knowledge of the people. The vice chairman said the Muslims of various nations meant to institute Islamic governments in their countries, but much of their acts of self-sacrifice to that end had gone to the wind solely because of the incompetence of their leaders.

He said that it was against the principles of Islam today for any person in Afghanistan to pull the trigger with the idea of doing away with his rivals. Larijani expressed hope that all sides to the conflict in Afghanistan would lay down their weapons and heed Iran's call for having an Afghanistan on her way to prosperity in an environment of peace and stability.

Majles' Budget Approval Process Discussed

*NC0112210195 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English
27 Nov 95 p 2*

[Editorial: "Majles Should Evaluate the Budget in Light of Social Justice and Self-Reliance"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani submitted the 138,113 billion rials budget of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the year 1375 (March 1996-March 1997) to the Islamic Consultative Assembly Majles yesterday.

The Legislature is now to deliberate on an extremely delicate task which is nothing but examining the details of the budget bill and putting its approval stamp on it.

This year, for the first time, there is a deadline for Majles to accomplish this important task: giving the deputies thirty to thirty-five days to discuss, approve and submit the final version of the budget bill to the Guardian's Council. The council will scrutinize it once again to check whether it complies with the letter and spirit of the Constitution as well as the Islamic jurisprudence.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is now going through a crash program of investments in construction of infrastructural projects. Hence, the budget should lay emphasis on financial discipline and prepare a ground for stability in investment giving assurance to the investors.

The bill provides for completing the pending projects or the projects which are presently underway.

If those projects are completed, the nation will be delighted to see its dream of a prosperous Iran come true.

The deputies should bear in mind that the budget determines the course of nation's progress. Hence, it should provide for income through export of non-oil goods in order to decrease the country's dependence on oil as the mainstay of our economy.

The budget provides for 51.5 percent of revenues from the export of oil, 19.6 percent from income taxes and 28.9 percent from other sources. The Majles should provide for reduction of reliance on oil. More importantly, the bill should be assessed in the light of principles of social justice in Islam.

Another special feature of the Second Development Plan is its stress on limiting the government activities in order to pave the path for a more active role of the private sector.

If privatization is carried out recklessly, the gap between the rich and the poor will increase day by day. Majles deputies, as true representatives of the nation, must be extremely careful in this regard.

All in all, social justice and self-reliance should be the cornerstones of the budget. The deputies must carefully keep these two elements in mind while studying the bill.

Expansion Projects, Economic, Social Information
96LA0008F Tehran SALAM in Persian 22 Sep 95 p 9

[FBIS Translated Text] **Note—What is before you is a question and answer session which was held at the end of the speech by Dr. Tabibian, the director of the Supreme Institute for Research in Planning and Development at the Scientific Seminar in Shahrivar [23 August-22 September] by the Iranian Statistical**

Center. The text of the speech was published on 28/06/1974 [19 September 1995] on the Economic Page.

[Question] Considering the experiences that you have in connection with statistics, data, and national calculations, what recommendation do you have for the executive officials?

[Answer] Every organization, appropriate to the duty that it performs, produces statistics. For instance, the Plan and Budget Organization makes a budget within the framework of special laws, and by doing so, in fact, it also engages in the production of statistics. Education, too, creates educational services, and as a result automatically produces statistics. What is important is for us to be able to form these statistics into a general framework of national calculations, and it is this issue that sometimes creates problems. It is a sensitive issue that requires special care. Sometimes the role of the sectors in the production of statistics and placing information within the general framework of national calculations is problematic. We must pay careful attention and use experts in order to both produce statistics properly and correctly and also to place them in the general framework of national calculations.

[Question] You referred to the historical discussion of statistics and information and discussed the role of economic organization and statistics and information in the process of planning for development. Considering the concept of development from the perspective of large-scale planning and the relationship between the various parts of development and problems that are created as a result of the backwardness of some of the political, cultural, economic, and social sectors, what recommendation do you find necessary, considering your own experiences?

[Answer] The discussion on organization is an interesting one and valid from the point of view of thought and research. Social and economic organizational changes of the societies are important matters. If we compare the developing countries to the developed ones, the difference we would notice is this very thing. That is, they organize the economy and the society better. One should keep in mind that what is of concern in regard to economic and societal organization and its relation to statistics, information and national accounts, is that the country's budget situation must be defined. We have to clarify the status of the Martyr's Foundation, the Foundation for the Oppressed, the Welfare Organization, municipalities. We have to clarify to what extent they are government or privately supported, or do they fall under a different system. The statistics must reflect economic realities. The Ministry of Reconstruction Jihad has a difficult spending budget than the Ministry of Higher

Education, they have two different financial and buying systems. Government companies have a different procedure which is not observed by government ministries. One can pay closer attention to its employees and the other cannot. Naturally the ministries are more important and they make the decisions and manage others. Some civil servants also are employed part time in companies. Consequently, the government's management of companies is muddled. There must be one single financial system and one law so as to diminish the differences. For example, contract work is done in one way at the municipalities and in another way, at the universities. Therefore, sources go where problems are easier solved. One can procure cement, building material and funding easier, and one with more difficulty. In order to understand these economic problems and realities, we need statistics and information to see their impact in the ministries, companies, foundations, municipalities and organizations. But since our economic system has not been designed properly and has not developed and evolved systematically on the basis of a theory, some disorder has resulted. At the present time, some of the funds have been allocated and some have not been allocated, some are under the framework of the government budget and some are not. The companies and foundations each operate differently. The issue of economic organization, in fact, goes back to the method of legislation. Unfortunately, legislation is misunderstood. For example, we know that when we want to write a law for the monetary system, social security, developmental plan, the educational system, etc., we must design a system. When we look at the 1307 [21 March 1928-20 March 1929] and 1314 [21 March 1935-20 March 1936] law, which is a copy of foreign laws, we see that someone has designed it and then they have written notes to it. For example, the plan and budget law was written by "Tin Bergen" for Iran. He designed and devised a system for the private, government sectors, and the economy. Perhaps at the time of Tin Bergen and earlier times, communist systems were regarded to be good for developing countries, but today we have realized that that system and that law are not suitable. If we want to write a law today, we must find an expert to design the system, write the articles and notes, with a group of legal experts, and then the Majles must give its opinion on the basis of policies and general principles and values in order for the law to be formed and written. But if a Majles deputy is to change a sentence and add a note, etc., the law is disrupted, and this creates problems. In other countries that have party systems, the issues are prepared in the parties, hustling is done, and ideological and value-based quarrels and perspectives are discussed, and the law enters the parliament as the government law. Then the party that has formed the

government and probably has the majority knows that it must vote for the law and does not add paragraphs and notes.

For example, a good piece of legislature is prepared, called the law on the protection of the rights of consumers, which has gone through a good process, has several volumes of documentation, and a group of people have prepared a system on the basis of national laws and the Constitution and on that basis written paragraphs and notes and proposed it, and it has been ratified. A group of legal and other experts have written the law, and in the Majles committees, a deputy, who is not an expert merely because he is a deputy, tries to change the paragraphs, and the law will not benefit the society. The number of laws that have been prepared after the revolution is large; the volumes of laws from the constitutional revolution to the [Islamic] revolution is the same size as the volumes of laws after the revolution, but still, they do not deal with laws and issues that solve our economic problems. If attention is paid to the organization of the economy and society and the necessary laws are formed accordingly, some of the problems in connection with the shortage and weakness of laws can be solved. For example, in regards to the monetary and financial system, the budget, the duties of the government sector, definition of the government sector, etc., the definitions must be clarified, the necessary laws devised, and statistics prepared in order to prepare a system that is able to clarify and specify the realities and the economic system for the researcher and decisionmakers.

[Question] We see that the statistics and data that are prepared by statistics centers are not timely and do not show us the relationship between the variables and the sectors. What should be done in this regard?

[Answer] What is most important in planning, and what we want to use in preparing the framework of a large-scale plan for the future years are "timely statistics," that is, at the time when the decision maker wants to have a picture of the present situation, he can become somewhat familiar with the present situation through statistics and data, and a chart of premises and results can be an effective help. For some tasks also, research is important for planning. For instance, in order to increase the price of fuel in planning, we must conduct research to see what effect an increase in the price of fuel will have on transportation. Hence, having the premises and results can be an effective aid. For studies that help in offering policies, statistics and data can be properly used, but in order for us to make use of our low statistical energy, we had better 1. prepare the statistics as much as possible on time and with precision and have the budget of the household, current population census,

large workshops, etc., as much as we can on time, because timely statistics play an important and suitable role in the decision making of officials. 2. We must convert the statistics to social and economic indexes, variables, and calculations because if alongside the premises and results, we can also have the statistics of the economic variables, they will help planning greatly.

[Question] We faced statistical problems during research on supply and demand with regard to rental housing, and we did not have the land index. Except for the statistics of the years that the census had been conducted (1355 [21 March 1976-20 March 1977] and 65 [21 March 1986-20 March 1987]), we did not find any other data, and it seemed that the Iranian Statistical Center should have conducted sampling for the years between the those in which a census is conducted in order for experts and researchers to have easier access to statistics.

[Answer] It is a proper suggestion, and for the other variables and sectors too it is better, to have samplings done between two censuses. If we want to have the employment statistics in the interval between population censuses, we will face problems, and it is desirable for the Statistical Center to have samplings and statistics for these instances.

[Question] You said that by paying subsidies, prices are shown low, the actual prices of products and expenditures are not clear, and as a result the economic calculations and variables are not correctly determined. We make the economic calculation at the market price and the price of the factors. When we look at the calculations, and with the price of factors, will the effect of subsidies and direct taxes not be eliminated? Does this problem still exist?

[Answer] If we convert the income of an Iranian household to dollars, we find a low figure, about \$300 per month, but when we look at their standard of living and consider the same goods that are used in an Iranian household and the situation in the Iranian household, we see that it is much more than \$300. One of the reasons for this situation is the chaos in prices. For example, in the United States and Europe, if a person wants to use electricity, he must pay \$100 per month, but in Iran, two or three months pass and then there is a bill for 400 tumans or 1,000 tumans. Hence, it is natural that the price of electricity in Iran is much lower than in other countries, and it is natural that the cost of electricity production in Iran is higher than in the United States because we buy the technology of electricity production at high prices and use this technology improperly, since we do not have maintenance management for it. Hence, electricity is produced at a higher cost in Iran than

in the United States, but the consumer pays much less for it. If we are to take the economic aspect of production, we should add the subsidy paid by the government to the consumer income and expenditures in order to see clearly what the production of the electricity network was and what the production and income of the consumer were. What shows the value of goods on the basis of economic theories today is the price of the competitive market. Hence, if we want to find the national calculation in an ideal country, that national calculation is correct, provided all goods and factors are calculated on the basis of the prices of the competitive market.

On the basis of the existence of monopolies, the farther the prices are from the competitive market and the more the turmoil increases, naturally, the farther the statistics and data that we collect will be from the economic realities. The solution is for us to try to improve the picture that we obtain.

[Question] Will economic development occur more rapidly if we have statistics?

[Answer] In order to better administer the economic affairs, which is a body of laws, more attention must be paid to statistics. Statistics and information are necessary for this task. The existence of better statistics requires us to have an idea and understanding of the body of the economic laws on the basis of which to know what data we must collect. Recently, an article was written by Douglass North. Douglass North is a Nobel Prize winner in economics and the proponent of the school of quantitative measurements. He says: If we imagine history to be 24 hours, man, who appeared about 10 million years ago, created the agricultural revolution about 10,000 years ago. In other words, in these 24 hours, only in the past 30 minutes has an economic revolution and development taken place, and in these 10 million years, man has lived like animals in deserts and caves for 9,990,000 years. It is only 10,000 years since the agricultural revolution occurred, and in these 10,000 years, about 250 years ago, the industrial revolution occurred. Hence, if we imagine human history to be 24 hours, we can almost say that the industrial revolution occurred in only the past few minutes. Of the total population of the world, in these 250 years, only 10 percent of the world population has significantly benefited from the fruits of the industrial revolution, and 90 percent still live in deprivation and relative backwardness. In most human societies, poverty is the rule of today's life, and comfort is an exception. In a few human societies (10 percent of the world population), comfort is the rule and poverty is the exception. We may ask, why has human society grown

and developed so late, and why has so little of this development occurred?

The answer to this question is related to the social, political, and cultural institutions and other issues. One reason for these incidents is that the societies that benefit today from the fruits of the industrial revolution are so active that they have had the "age of enlightenment and utilize thinking" and have thought about social issues. The rest have not gone through this age. Hence, before development, we must accept that we must go through the phase and age of "enlightenment." We might think that we are enlightened people and have PhDs in mathematics, physics, and other sciences in our country, and are a people with an ancient culture and literature, and have one of the oldest cultures in the world, and have played an important role in the development of culture, but we must note that in our collective thinking, on the economic scene, we still do not employ logic and do not think logically. Whenever we want to make economic decisions, we do not pay attention to the shortage of the economic sources and resources of the country. The problem is that we do not have sufficient resources at our disposal. We have a shortage of foreign currency, we have low revenues, and no one pays any attention, and it is said constantly that there is shortage of medicine, shortening, rice, sugar, etc. Hence, if we want to have these, we must eat less for a while in order to be able to produce. It is logical to produce what we can, and we must not consume what we cannot produce. Some lay the blame on the Plan and Budget Organization, but we do not realize that the Plan and Budget Organization has not been in charge here. It has been subservient. We must note how we must spend when we have no income. One complains about the situation of education and why funds are not allocated to it. One complains about the inappropriate situation of health and treatment. It must be answered that our funds, revenues, and resources are limited and are not as much as they expect. The solution is that, instead of some organization building a very chic hospital with CT scanners, etc., we should build 10 ordinary hospitals to treat dysentery and other illnesses. As a result, two patients who suffer from complicated heart and brain diseases might die, but instead, 100 ordinary patients and children will be spared death, and this is a logical action.

Sometimes it is said in the committees that heart valves cost \$100,000, and if we do not have the 7-tuman dollar, how can a patient acquire the dollars to save his life? But if we pay attention, we see that with the amount that is supposed to be spent on treating a heart or brain patient or severe illnesses, we can import tetanus, rabies, and polio vaccines and save a large number of

people. It is logical to choose a path that is able to allocate the resources in the best possible manner and save the lives of a larger number of people. In regards to bread, it can be said that we import as much wheat as we waste and ruin. Why do we act so bad, wasting bread and throwing it in the trash? Because bread is inexpensive. How many times must a baker reach in and out of a kiln to make 100 tumans? Naturally, the possibility for violations, mistakes, and smuggling is created in this economic and social system. If such incidents are to be prevented, the price must be made logical. Logical economic thinking demands that we create a true and logical harmony among the variables and prices in the economy, and unfortunately, we do not pay attention to these points. Logic and thinking in the economy require us to create logical harmony among the economic, political, international, cultural, and other interests. If we want our situation to improve, we must not engage in some of the expenditures of various kinds. Of course, sometimes it is necessary to quarrel with some people in the world and have conflicts for the sake of our identity, culture, and ideals, and in that case, accept that public food and sugar and oil consumption will face limitations, and we cannot have both at the same time. Hence, before discussing statistics and data and before we look and gather statistics, data, and national accounts, we must change our economic thinking to logical thinking. This issue not only should be discussed among the economists and experts, but in the society as well.

Leadership Conflict in Regime Viewed

96LH0006 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic
30 Sep pp 31-32

[Article by 'Ali Reza Nuri-Zadeh: "Who Rules Iran—the Constitutional President or the Vali-ye Faqih?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an interview with the radical newspaper SOBH late this past July, the Khomeyni-era Interior Minister 'Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, former Iranian ambassador to Damascus and spiritual father of Hezbollah, who leads the faction opposed to the Rafsanjani-led reform policy, said, "We are history; they imposed isolation upon us. We no longer have anything to do but write our memoirs about the revolution for history. There is an office in the Islamic Information Organization in charge of recording the memoirs of the revolutionaries, of whom I am one."

In the same interview, Mohtashemi complained about Ayatollah Khamene'i, saying that "in the last parliamentary elections, in which the Council of the Guardians of the Constitution refused to support the powers of the radical candidates and the line of the imam, government agencies hoisted large banners proclaiming, 'Don't

Elect the Sowers of Dissension,' alluding to those who would stir up dissension apart from the ballot boxes. Despite the fact that Ayatollah Khamene'i later said he was 'not aware that his comment would be used against us' and that he was not opposed to us, the atmosphere turned against us. This was a sign of our banishment from our role in running society." Mohtashemi fiercely attacked Rafsanjani's government and the liberal factions, saying that "liberalism in all its guises has infiltrated our lives, and whoever defends liberalism in the economy"—meaning Rafsanjani—"could not withstand the manifestations of the free market economy, the capitalists and monopolists returning to the country after the revolution threw them out, bringing with them the germs of cultural, political, and social liberalism. To make way for them, faithful revolutionary forces, trying to resist these things, must be sacrificed; and this is already happening. We are already seeing a change in priorities, with the accumulation of wealth and the enjoyment of luxury being the main goal. The society is headed for moral and social collapse, and this is what we are seeing; corruption in all its forms. We see signs of corruption, indecency, and detestable deeds both in private and in public."

Despite the fact that Mohtashemi has insisted he has been banished from politics, in the second part of his interview with SOBH he revealed his membership in the council of political advisors to the Leader of the Revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i. In response to a question about his activities these days, he said: "I spend part of my time studying Islamic jurisprudence and the fundamentals of the law. I also have some religious activities; I engage in my original profession, going to mosques and mourning councils to preach to people, and there is the matter of writing my memoirs about the revolution for the Islamic Information Organization. I am also a member of the committee formed by Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Moussavi Khoeniha (former public prosecutor and hajj leader in the Khomeyni era) by the order of the Leader of the Revolution." The members of this committee (all of them radicals and Line of the Imam) meet twice a month and discuss the various issues of concern to the country and its citizens, and offer recommendations and counsel to Ayatollah Khamene'i.

Mohtashemi's interview with SOBH, published by Mehdi Nasiri, formerly editor in chief of KEYHAN and one of the Students Following the Line of the Imam, is the best indication that the "kings of the sects" ruling Iran since the revolution still hold powerful positions for exercising their authority, both in Khamene'i's office and through Hezbollah as well.

In early September, Tehran witnessed a Hezbollah show of strength when a group of Hezbollah's men, calling themselves the Guards and the Basij, attacked the Margh Amin bookstore in Karim Khan Street in central Tehran on the orders of Ayatollah Ahmed Janati, a member of the Council of the Guardians of the Constitution, and the capital city's temporary Friday Prayer Leader. In less than an hour, the attackers demolished the bookstore, burned the books inside it, and beat up the employees—all because the bookstore published a novel about a young revolutionary whose crimes and deviant practices are exposed in the novel. The novel obtained prior clearance from the Ministry of Islamic Guidance; in spite of that, it angered Hezbollah and so they destroyed the bookstore, whose owner dared to insult the members of Hezbollah and Islam.

One of the major difficulties foreign countries face, especially Western and Arab countries, in their dealings with Iran, is that there is not one sole authority with which these countries may do business, on the basis of which they may define the course of their policies toward Iran. After the constitutional revolution in Iran at the beginning of this century, which ended the life of the kings of the sects, the government of Iran was in the hands of the king and his prime minister, and, to some extent, the Parliament. In the time of Reza Shah, he became the sole holder of power, while his son Mohammad Reza Shah was forced for many years to share power with his prime ministers and the National Consultative Council. This came to an end with the fall of Mossadegh, when the Shah seized all the power. When Khomeyni assumed power, he announced that he intended to go to Qom to teach and instruct, and to leave the government to its people. The imam's seclusion did not last long, for he returned to Tehran and began to exercise powers above those even of the Shah. While the Shah lacked spiritual authority, Imam Khomeyni considered himself to be the deputy of the Imam of the Age (the Mahdi) and the actual ruler. Hence the people lost their power and sovereignty. According to the theory of the *velayat-e faqih*, power belongs to God and the Vali-ye Faqih [supreme jurisconsult] exercises God's power on earth, according to Shiite thinking.

Although the Constitution acknowledges the right of the people to choose its representatives and the president, this right clashes with the powers of the Vali-ye Faqih, who can dissolve Parliament and dismiss the president. Also, the Council of the Guardians of the Constitution, which oversees the powers of Parliament and chooses the candidates for the parliamentary and presidential elections, has six jurisprudents chosen by the Vali-ye Faqih, and six jurists chosen by the Supreme Council of Judges appointed by its chief, the Vali-ye Faqih.

The power structure in Iran is mysterious; there is nothing like it in history, nor in our contemporary world. The problem of dealing with Iran is not so much because of the multiplicity of power centers as it is linked to the contradictions inherent in Iranian rhetoric.

Seventeen years after the revolution, the Iranian leadership has not succeeded in establishing its state as an alternative to the other states in the world, and of course to the Shah's state. In spite of that, it claims that the ruling regime in Iran is the best government since the days of the Caliphate. Ayatollah Khamene'i recently proclaimed that "our country is today seen as a model for the peoples of the world, even some of the superpowers." The fundamentals of the modern state do not exist in Iran, when one considers:

1. It is a popularly elected regime, but its legitimacy stems from the Vali-ye Faqih's support for it. In other words, the elected president does not consider himself responsible to those who elected him; it is the Vali-ye Faqih he must please.

2. According to the Constitution, the cabinet ministers are responsible to the people which exercises its right to question and dismiss the ministers through its representatives in the Islamic Consultative Majles. The Constitution itself grants the Vali-ye Faqih the power to dismiss the president, fire cabinet ministers, and nullify parliamentary resolutions.

3. In all the countries of the world, the head of state (king or president) holds the supreme command of the armed forces, and exercises his powers either through the Minister of Defense or the Army Chief of Staff. In the ruling regime in Iran, Ayatollah Khamene'i, who did not even want to serve the flag, on the grounds that he was a clergyman, is supreme commander in chief of the Armed Forces. He does not exercise these powers through the Minister of Defense and the Army Chief of Staff, but through a veterinarian, Hasan Rostabadi, whom he granted the rank of major general, and appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

There is the Supreme National Security Council, created by the president. He has the power to define the course of the country's policies in all fields and all matters. Yet the decisions of this Council usually clash with the decisions of the Expediency Discernment Council formed by the Vali-ye Faqih, and there is also the Committee of Advisors to the Vali-ye Faqih, among whose members are Mohtashmi and Khoeniha (the leader of the Students Following the Line of the Imam who occupied the U.S. Embassy and took 52 diplomats captive for 444 days). This Committee offers counsel to the Vali-ye Faqih on running the country. Additionally, the unlimited powers of the Vali-ye Faqih allow Ayatollah Khamene'i to intrude into all matters,

from choosing the mayor of a small village in Bushehr to appointing the ambassador to Canada.

It may be noted in this regard that President Rafsanjani nominated former Central Bank Governor Dr. Mohammad Hoseyn 'Adeli to be Iran's ambassador to Canada after the expiration of Mohammad Hoseyn Lavasani's tenure as ambassador. However, Leader of the Revolution Khamene'i rejected the nomination on the advice of his advisors, who accused 'Adeli of belonging to the liberal school of economics and politics. Despite the fact that Rafsanjani succeeded, in the end, in persuading Khamene'i to give his blessing to 'Adeli's appointment, this did not happen until Rafsanjani agreed to Khamene'i's candidate for a high-ranking diplomatic post in one of the Gulf states.

There is a saying in Iran that there will be no establishment of a government in Iran in the acknowledged sense as long as the Velayat-e Faqih is in force. Rafsanjani himself, who defended the theory of the Velayat-e Faqih in the Assembly of Experts which wrote the Iranian Constitution after the revolution, has become a victim of that theory.

Behzad Nabavi Responds to His Opponents

96LA0046B Tehran 'ASR-E MA in Persian
18 Oct 95 pp 1, 8

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting Saturday [14 October] night that lasted three hours, brother Behzad Nabavi answered various questions prepared beforehand by his opponents.

At this question and answer session, Behzad Nabavi discussed the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution of Iran's motivation for classifying the nation's political groups and factions, and answered questions mostly having to do with his past.

He also answered questions about his cooperation with certain known individuals, his views on the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult, Martyr Mojtahari and Martyr Shari'ati, the government's economic policies, and the coming Majles elections.

The aforementioned meeting was organized by a group known as the "West Tehran Hezbollah" at a home on Hashemi street, and a statement concerning this was distributed in Tehran.

With regard to the necessity to classify the nation's political factions, Behzad Nabavi said: The problem today in our society is the lack of coordinated thinking and the lack of a specific line on political, economic, social and cultural matters. Our analysis of the existing political groups is for the purpose of presenting the

various existing points of view to committed and revolutionary youth.

He emphasized the fact that only political parties and organizations can form coordinated intellectual cells. He added: The goal of the Mojahedin Islamic Revolution Organization in the new period of its activity is to clarify and to present coordinated thinking. With its insignificant resources and small number of members and supporters, it has neither the intention nor the ability to govern.

Behzad Nabavi was asked why he has only undertaken to study groups within the government. He said: Today there is no longer any need to classify the groups outside the government, because other groups such as the liberals, the hypocrites [Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] and the leftist groups are considered dead and are no threat to the government of the Islamic Republic. These classified groups are supporters of the revolution and the government, and they will determine the fate of the nation and society.

He discussed the history of the political groups in society and noted that after the triumph of the revolution the political forces were divided into the liberals and the hezbollah. After Bani Sadr's flight, the hezbollah were divided into two factions, the "left" and the "right." He said: With the formation of the Militant Clergy Association [Jame'h Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez], the hezbollah were officially divided at the leadership level into the left and right factions, and then after the year 1367 [21 March 1988 - 20 March 1989] these two groups also gradually became four.

He said: Although some groups protested 'ASR-E MA's undertaking to divide the Islamic political groups into factions, these factions have effectively formed, and these terms are even being used by their opponents.

He said that the fate of the government is in the hands of four political groups, the left, the new left, the modern right and the traditional right, but he did not discuss the way each of these factions thinks, leaving that to be explained in 'ASR-E MA's articles.

Behzad Nabavi was asked why the Guardian Council rejected his competence to be a candidate in the elections for the Third Majles, and whether the Guardian Council was unjust, or he lacked the competence. He answered: I asked repeatedly that the accusations against me be made public, but the Guardian Council refused to do this. At the same time, it is possible both that I have the competence (and I definitely have as much as many of the current deputies) and that they consider themselves just, in the sense that the removal of me and those like me is in the interest of Islam, the revolution

and the government, and that they regard any means that will achieve the "sacred goal" as being allowable.

He added: According to unofficial information, the accusations against me included the claim that in 1344 [21 March 1965 - 20 March 1966] I congratulated the shah on the revolution of the shah and the people and that when France was giving Iraq the Exocet missile and the Super Etendard aircraft I negotiated with that country. It is interesting that the matter of saying congratulations was a nominal formality. In the second case, I told the person who raised the point that at that time dealing with France was not forbidden, and at that time everyone was queuing up to buy French meat.

In answer to the question about the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult, Behzad Nabavi said: As in the first days of the revolution, our organization has a heart-felt belief and a practical commitment to the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult. In those days, there was no talk of "vice regency from top to bottom or from bottom to top" or "absolute or conditional" vice regency. I do not accept these debates and do not consider them to be in the interest of the revolution, the government or the leadership. At the same time, I do not believe in vice-regency from the top in the way that some of the gentlemen are discussing it.

With regard to the activities of the new Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization in the Majles elections, he said: Whether or not this organization presents candidates will depend on the circumstances. Of course I have heard that the leader has told the Guardian Council not to reject anyone's competence for political reasons, but at the same time it is being said that the Guardian Council has told the Central Supervision Council that there is no need to study anew the competence of those whose competence was rejected for the previous Majles term. Naturally, under such circumstances, it will be difficult to make a decision about presenting candidates.

Behzad Nabavi added: The Militant Clergy Association, which effectively leads the leftist faction, also according to what is being said about the elections, will not present a candidate. Of course since the leftist group accepts the government, it will not boycott the elections in any case.

He said that the government's policy of economic adjustment is based on an investment economy, a market liberation mechanism and privatization, and that the measures taken to control prices were tactical and obligatory but not based on a strategic change in the policy of economic adjustment.

Sorush, Gaffari Invited To Debate

96LA0050A Tehran ABRAR in Persian 22 Oct 95 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] News Service—The Islamic Society of the College of Psychology and Educational Sciences of 'Allameh Tabataba'i University sent two letters, one to Dr. Hoseyn Ghaffari, the head of the Philosophy Division of Tehran University, and one to Dr. 'Abdolkarim Soroush, inviting them to engage in a face to face debate.

The first letter, addressed to Dr. Ghaffari, states: Following the incident at the Technical College and later reactions to it by Dr. 'Abdolkarim Soroush, despite his usual avoidance of debates and confrontational approaches, this time apparently he has announced his readiness to debate.

This letter adds: Since in the present climate that governs the universities and student environments, there is serious need to examine the opinions of Dr. Soroush, which are unrelated to the ideas of His Holiness the late Imam, because he has engaged for years unilaterally here and there in creating doubt and anxiety in the minds of the people, and because you have a religious background and are among the distinguished students of Martyr Morteza Motahhari and earlier too in your book, *Critique of Quiet Religious Jurisprudence*, you have analyzed his ideas, we would like to once again clarify these issues in the minds of the young people and students through a face to face debate with Dr. Soroush.

The other letter this college addressed to Dr. Soroush states: Even though Your Excellency has frequently avoided debates in various forms, considering that you have stated that your goal is intellectualism, we request that Your Honor participate in this debate to solve the intellectual problems that have been created and, by avoiding inappropriate excuses, express your views clearly and frankly.

This letter states: The Islamic Society of the College of Psychology and Educational Sciences of 'Allameh Tabataba'i University awaits the written response to the letters from both parties.

Ghaffari Ready To Debate Soroush96LA0050B Tehran ABRAR in Persian 22 Oct 95
pp 1, 2

[Report on interview with Dr. Hoseyn Ghaffari, professor and head of the Philosophy Division of Tehran University, by unidentified correspondent on 21 October; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] "The Philosophical Theory of the Contraction and Expansion of Religious Law," Dr. Ghaffari's proposal for debate with Dr. Soroush.

For years, Dr. Soroush has created doubt in the general beliefs of the young people and students based on his ideas.

News Service.

Dr. Hoseyn Ghaffari, professor and head of the Philosophy Division of Tehran University, announced his readiness to engage in a face-to-face debate with Dr. 'Abdolkarim Soroush yesterday and said: The main thrust of the debate with him will be the "theory of contraction and expansion of religious law." He explained: This debate will be philosophical and not political.

In an interview with ABRAR, referring to the incident two weeks ago at the Technical College of Tehran University, he said: Disrupting a scholarly lecture is not a defensible act.

Dr. Ghaffari said: No matter how strongly one believes in a system, he must preserve the sanctity of the environment in which people of the society are acquiring science and knowledge. He cannot violate the sanctity of this system in order to defend the regime.

The professor of Tehran University said: This action will result in the repetition of such actions at any time and for any excuse.

Nevertheless, in exploring the roots of the incident at the Technical College, which was a repeat of the incident at Esfahan University, he added: We must see what motivated these young people, whoever they were. For years, Dr. Soroush has been creating doubt in the general beliefs of young people and students in the academic circles with his ideas. Of course, he thinks this is right. In any case, some will react to him.

The Tehran University professor pointed out that in the past students have twice requested a debate between him and Dr. Soroush and said: Despite my acceptance, Dr. Soroush, who has been propagating his views for seven or eight years, after setting various conditions, did not accept this debate.

Rejecting any sort of political motive in inviting Dr. Soroush to debate, Dr. Ghaffari said: This debate will only be philosophical and not political. The central issue of the discussion between me and Dr. Soroush will only be about the "theory of contraction and expansion of religious laws," and any other issues raised by him will be discussed.

He said: In this debate, the security of which must be guaranteed, a group of university professors will be present who will express their opinions at the end. According to Dr. Ghaffari, this debate could be broadcast from the Voice and Vision. The details of

this interview will be published for ABRAR readers tomorrow.

Ghaffari on Debate, University Incident

96LA0050C Tehran ABRAR in Persian 23 Oct 95
pp 1, 2, 4

[Report on interview with Dr. Hoseyn Ghaffari, professor and head of the Philosophy Division of Tehran University, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] How Should the Debate Be Conducted?

News Service

In an interview with ABRAR, Dr. Hoseyn Ghaffari, a professor in the philosophy Division of Tehran University, explained his views regarding the incident at the Technical College of that university two weeks ago.

In his opinion, that incident, which in itself has been determined to be an improper action and was condemned, was a reaction against several years of philosophical positions by Dr. 'Abdolkarim Soroush, who had created doubt in the beliefs of the young people.

Dr. Ghaffari then announced once again his readiness to debate Dr. Soroush face-to-face and said: In the past, he was invited several times to debate, but Dr. Soroush refused. In response to the first question, regarding the incident at the Technical College, he said:

Of course, if the question refers to the incident that occurred, I have not heard an impartial report, and what I know comes through the announcements of the two sides, which are not very reliable. Hence, because I do not have the necessary information, I have no opinion regarding this incident. This question can be posed differently. If we suppose that it is, as the rumors have it, that is, that we want to give an opinion without dealing with the details, it must be said that this was a scholarly lecture which was disrupted. Whether or not this incident was accompanied by insults and violence, there is no doubt that the occurrence of such incidents in the environment of the university on the whole, by any group or faction for any purpose or goal, cannot be justified, except under exceptional circumstances, like those at the beginning of the revolution, when there was no regime, or it was in danger and there were various groups in the country that were somewhat autonomous. Under such circumstances, one could justify that a person had to take action to protect the regime, but under the circumstances when there is security and a

specific powerful regime exists in a society, we cannot engage in such actions, particularly in a place that has sanctity, because that is where science and knowledge are acquired. At the same time, no matter how much a person believes in the regime, he must protect this sanctity even more. Because we want to defend the regime, we cannot violate the sanctity that the regime itself observes for such places, because in its general and overall form, this action will result in the justification that it can be repeated at any time and in any form for any excuse. We must actually condemn this action regardless of its purpose. Even outside the university environment, when there is a scholarly discussion, if its sanctity is violated and such incidents occur, they cannot really be defended, because every job requires its own conditions and its own situation.

He added: Hence, on the whole, without dealing with the motives of either side, we cannot find any justification for such incidents in the sacred environment of the university.

This is certain, and I do not think anyone who has a cultural and scientific spirit can reject it, but what was the motive behind such an incident? This is an important and key question which we cannot disregard. Apparently, those who were involved in the incident were people who had taken this action in defense of the religion. In other words, this incident was not the result of any personal or political motive. How should we deal with such an issue here? We must see what has happened to cause a group of people to violate the sanctuary of a system that they respect themselves.

What we have heard is that the young people who protested Dr. Soroush said that he must engage in a debate regarding what he said. Of course, it is certain that those individuals were not people who could themselves debate Mr. Soroush. In other words, they did not mean for a first-year student to engage in a debate with him, but the fact is—and we cannot ignore this issue—that a similar incident occurred in Esfahan some time ago. Obviously, there is a common aspect to these incidents. This common aspect, in my opinion, is that for years Dr. Soroush has created doubt in the general beliefs of young people and students regarding the religious principles and precepts based on his ideas.

Of course, in his opinion, he has done the proper thing. In any case, we are merely giving a descriptive report of the matter. From the point of view of those young people, the issue is that their religious foundation is being shattered. Some might come to believe in the opinions of Dr. Soroush and become his supporters. But what about the person who does not believe in them? In other words, a group of people reacted to him because

they do not believe in such ideas. If this speech is made once, twice, or six times, these individuals will tolerate it and say, well, this was a speech and it is over; another person will come and make another speech; today, this person is speaking and tomorrow another will. But the story changes when you place a strong current against a weak current; that is, a group of college students who not long ago were precollegiate students and have come from behind their high school desks to the university and are not learned scholars or professors. If a person who has prepared himself concerning an intellectual issue for several years questions their statements continuously and systematically, both the principles and precepts, and there is no room left to be the target their attacks, what can such individuals do? They must stop him and say, Sir, come and make your speech, but you must have a debate with someone else who is at your level of thought and is also approved for us to clarify the issue under discussion.

[ABRAR] Dr., here there are two issues. First, Mr. Soroush had announced his readiness to debate some time ago, but nothing was seen from the opposite party. Second, considering the instances that occurred in Esfahan and Tehran, if they occur the day after tomorrow in another university and, for instance, in a political seminar, a person comes and raises a viewpoint that may not be acceptable to others and it ends in a physical fight, what should be done to prevent such violent incidents? These incidents disrupt the stability of the university environment, which is a place for discussions and the exchange of views and opinions.

[Ghaffari] I will answer your first question later and begin with your second question.

Essentially, the university is a place for differences of opinion. But there is a time when one person comes and makes a speech and leaves, and, on the other side, two months later, for example, another comes and makes a speech. Essentially, the university is just such an environment. But the story of Dr. Soroush is that he has been attacking via one line and from one angle against one group of people.

In other words, you should not think that the issue is that one person made a speech, had a round-table discussion, which was opposed to my opinion and I came and said, I will not allow you to talk. Rather, this is being done constantly. Then you must forget about research, in which case, it is a violation of intent. (Essentially, what we say is that people should learn something.)

Or if a person, in the long term with a strategic objective and a specific line, creates problems in this area, it is the natural right of others and it is the first principle

of freedom to say, Go and argue with the party that opposes you.

Regarding Mr. Soroush, unfortunately, this is not so. I know for myself that on three occasions he has been earnestly invited to debate and refused. Six or seven years ago, the Teacher Training College students requested a written debate between me and him. I accepted, but he did not. About a year ago, in a course of a long story that lasted for several months, one of his close friends had a discussion with me, and when he could no longer respond he said, Dr. Soroush should have a discussion with you. I announced that I was ready. This lasted several months. Finally, they came and said that Dr. Soroush had said that he is ready for a discussion. They said: Talk to this radio and television. I myself talked with radio and television, and they asked to broadcast the debate. They said: Speak with the minister of Islamic culture and guidance. Again, I did this myself, and Mr. Larijani agreed. He said: There has to be a cleric, and spoke with Mr. Mesbah, who agreed. He said: Something must be written. I said: Sir, what is all this talk? If you want to have a discussion, why do you set so many conditions? This issue lasted six months and finally came to no conclusion. I have witnesses who are friends of Mr. Soroush who will corroborate this, as well. Even radio and television had made requests of him, which he did not accept. He sets so many conditions that it reminds you of the story of the Israelites. When God told them to sacrifice a cow, they started and asked: How old should the cow be? How much should it weight? What color should it be? And so on. And God dealt with them as He did.

My experience with him has been the same. A person must not disturb the climate of the society so much. If he is really seeking the truth, the issue would become clear in two or three sessions. Of course, not all issues can be discussed in a debate, but the general points of the issues become clear. At least, those who are curious will see what the other side has to offer. If we say what we want in the society and tell others that we do not want to speak to anyone, we disturb the atmosphere. But when those issues concern these people and address all the ontological truths of the people, especially in a society whose government is based on religion, what would you do if you were that student?

[ABRAR] Dr. Soroush had said that a debate requires a series of means, including a free environment, and for the positions of both sides to be clear to each other. At the same time, it is felt that Dr. Soroush does not want to speak openly because his theory of contraction and expansion of religious law will automatically have some consequences, one of which is the theory of a religious democratic government which inflicts harm on

the principle of religious guardianship. I think that Dr. Soroush does not want to engage in this issue. One of the issues that he raises implicitly is that the opposite side says that you do not accept religious guardianship on the basis of this principle; hence, he is rejected and condemned from the very beginning and cannot say anything. This may explain his refusal to debate.

[Ghaffari] You made several points in what you said. One is that you say a debate must have some criteria. Well, perhaps none of these criteria have been met. Is it better for a human being to be patient and bear hardship or to create disturbance in the society? At the same time, in the past, he has set conditions that we have met. Now we invite the representatives of the press. An arbitration committee of university professors will come. They also will come from radio and television to record the debate, and at the same time, the security for the session will be provided. I do not think anyone else can assure these conditions.

Regarding your second point, his views on religious guardianship, the issue that may drag the debate into excommunication from the very beginning, I guarantee that I will not engage in a political and social discussion and will not speak about religious guardianship, because the discussion is so philosophical that it will not get to these points. I will only engage in a discussion of religious and philosophical topics. At the same time, if Dr. Soroush does not engage in a discussion and debate for this reason, it shows his weakness in that a thinker has said something but is not prepared to stand up for what he says. If a person thinks that what he says is not something that can be said, why does he say it to create problems for others? Despite opposing him, I find it unlikely that he is so afraid, because that would be a sign of weakness for a thinker. At the same time, thinkers who understand his views are not few in number, and if something were going to happen because of his beliefs, it would already have happened.

Moreover, he has for all practical purposes engaged in a political game. What he does is unworthy of a thinker. A thinker has a theory and states that anyone who wants to can accept it and anyone who does not will not. In a religious government, speaking about the foundations of religion and the bases for understanding the religion, especially in a contrary fashion, in addition to being an intellectual activity is a political one. In France, if you speak all day about the government system, they will not say that you are engaged in an intellectual activity; they will say you are engaged in a political activity. Hence, a person who engages in political activity must not be afraid of its side effects.

[ABRAR] What will be the central issue of the debate which will take place in the future in any form? I remember the time when Your Honor wrote articles in the old KEYHAN about the theories of contraction and expansion of religious laws, which were later published under the title of "Quiet Religious Law." Apparently, they did not publish your articles. What central issue did your criticism cover regarding the relativity of Dr. Soroush's religious understanding that apparently the officials of the newspaper at the time were reluctant to print?

[Ghaffari] He apparently said that he was ready to debate. We are ready, too, because we want to reduce disruptions in the society. We must not inflict harm on a regime that has been achieved on the basis of the blood that has been spilled and religious ideals. Indeed, I want to have a debate with Dr. Soroush on the basis of religious commitment and religious duty. Neither am I affiliated with any of the political factions that are or are not in power, nor do I have any role in the security arrangements of the country. I consider it a religious duty to counter anything that is contrary to justice and truth and destroys the foundations of the religion.

I hope that if Dr. Soroush pursues this issue on the basis of truth, he will come and let us debate without setting any conditions, and this debate must have a series of criteria. It must have an arbitration committee, and the representatives of the press must be present. When a discussion takes place between two intellectual factions, there should be no disorder as a consequence. Let the people come and let this discussion continue to reach results. There is no need for the debaters to announce the results. Rather, whenever the arbitration committee determines that the discussion has reached the point of no longer being useful to continue, and both sides have said what they have to say, it can announce its views.

As for my opinion regarding Dr. Soroush, I am opposed to all that he says. In other words, I have an argument against and am opposed to all his works, from his first to his last, which is called "Freedom and the Clergy." But because of the importance of the issue, regarding the theory of contraction and expansion of religious law that Dr. Soroush regards as the spiritual heart of his ideas, I will discuss that with him. I oppose his argument separating religious knowledge from the truth of religion, that our understanding of religion is beyond the truth of religion, or any religious understanding depends on outside knowledge and man cannot have a permanent and fixed understanding of religion. If in this discussion he convinces me, I will take back what I have said and am prepared to kiss his hand and become a disciple of his. If I prove the opposite of his views, he must take back what he says, and then I will

be ready to discuss each and every one of his views, including the "testing of the idea of testability," in which a great deal of destructive things have been said about religious issues and also about "religious democratic government."

I want to show that his suppositions about religion are like those of people like Voltaire and Rousseau, who in the 18th century recommended ideology without the necessity of religious law and divine inspiration. I am prepared to prove that what he says is nothing more than this. Moreover, he keeps the titles and changes the concepts. For example, in the chapter "Religion Is Like Politics," he also accepts this issue but distorts the content, or his discussion on ethics and how it cannot be related to theoretical thinking or how it cannot be related to the requirements and prohibitions, which is an absolutely erroneous and incorrect argument and is incompatible to Islamic knowledge. Also, none of his arguments is innovative and original, because he has combined the dead ends of Western culture and presented them as theory. His view regarding ethics is from Hume; regarding understanding and knowledge, from Kant; and concerning religion, from Christian liberals.

[ABRAR] In continuing your discussion, a proper debate can be carried out on the basis of the methodology of Dr. Soroush, that is, the epistemology of the theory of contraction and expansion of religious law. Dr. Larijani has also said that he has nothing new to say. Now, in order to make your positions more clear, is your basic argument with Dr. Soroush the fact that the relativity of knowledge is not true in the area of religion, or is it that this is not true in any field of science?

[Ghaffari] I will argue in both cases and show that this is incorrect. Moreover, why should we provide so much propaganda for our opponents and the enemies of the country and change it to a political issue?

Is the issue that Dr. Soroush and his supporters raise, stating that freedom is under attack and has been harmed and that they are not free to say what they want, true? In fact, in this country, what is being attacked is not freedom, as these gentlemen say. I am myself not without criticism of the political solutions and the political structure. In other words, I object to the quality of preliminary steps that are devised for the so-called political participation of the members of the society in the government structure and consider them insufficient and think that our society has not thought properly about political participation or has not accepted it, and the tensions that might exist among the various members of the society are to some extent the result of these specific criteria for the political participation of the

people in the regime. Now, my objection may be correct or incorrect. The political structure may also be the target of protest, for example, if a person says his entry to the Majles is restricted or that there is a lack of numerous parties in the country, or questions the situation of the parties that accept the regime but are in the opposition. Of course, what I say is not divine inspiration, but what exists in abundance as intellectual freedom does not exist anywhere else in the world. In this connection, Mr. Soroush cannot demand justice or freedom. What are the rights of a thinker? Mr. Soroush has acquired an unimaginable amount. Look, our government is a religious one, built on the foundation of religious beliefs, and the people obey it and the religious leaders. Such a government allows an individual to question all that is held sacred by the people without any problem. He even does not accept religious government. Has anyone made the slightest insult against him? The incident at the Technical College was that a few students came and said: Have a debate. What I mean is that no government official has protested against him. He cannot say that there is no freedom. I do not know what kind of freedom he wants. Problems may exist with regard to freedom, but in this case there are no problems.

Pakistan

Babar: Arab National Financed Egyptian Embassy Bomb

BK0512064595 Islamabad *THE NATION* in English
5 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar said that four more persons have been arrested in connection with the Egyptian Embassy bomb blast during the last twenty four hours.

Talking to the newsmen in his chamber at the Parliament House Monday [4 December], Babar said, "We have arrested 16 suspected people so far in connection with the Egyptian Embassy bombing. We have arrested a man on Sunday and three more on Monday". Babar did not disclose the name of the arrested persons for what he thinks a security reason, however, giving the details of the progress of the on-going investigations in the bombing incident he said after interrogating the showroom owner, from where the culprits had bought the vehicle which was used in the blast, car dealer, salesman and a mechanic were released as they were found innocent during the interrogations.

About a question regarding the American FBI team, Babar said the FBI team had left for Washington and it consisted of explosive experts who were invited here to examine the explosive used in the blast. He said

the team will send its findings after the examination of certain specimen of the explosive. He said the explosive experts team of Pakistan Ordinance team, who had also examined the explosive had completed its report but when asked about the findings of the report Babar said, "We will make the report public after comparing it with the other reports".

About the "would be terrorist" whose body is laying at the Forensic Department of the Rawalpindi General Hospital for identification, Babar said the showroom employees who were interrogated by the authority confirmed that it was probably the same person who had bought the vehicle.

To another question, Babar said they had not received any visible identification marks of the terrorists suspect sought by the Egyptian Government.

Agencies add: Naseerullah Babar said an Arab had financed bombing of the Egyptian Embassy.

Babar did not identify the country to which the suspected financier belongs but said the man was captured Sunday trying to slip across the border from Afghanistan.

Since his arrest four other Arabs have also been taken into custody, Babar told the reporters without giving further details.

Sixteen Arabs have so far been arrested in connection with the bombing, which was reportedly carried out by two bombers.

To a question Naseerullah Khan Babar said that the FBI team will submit its findings to Pakistan after laboratory test of the material used in explosion. He said that the security in the federal capital has been beefed up and Frontier Constabulary has been called to avert any further subversive activities. Babar answering a question denied that the U.S. FBI had opened up an office in Pakistan in the garb of investigating the embassy blast.

He said the fact of the matter is that an agreement was reached between the United States and Pakistan according to which one FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] official of Pakistan has been stationed at the embassy in Washington while an FBI official has been stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad.

Further on Babar Remarks

BK0512013895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0100 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Major General, retired, Nasirullah Khan Babar has said that so far 16 Arab nationals suspected of being involved in the bomb blast at the Egyptian Embassy have been arrested.

Talking to newsmen in Islamabad yesterday evening, he said the Federal Investigation Agency is interrogating the arrested suspects, some of whom have been deported to their respective countries, not because they were found to have been involved in the bomb explosion but because they were living illegally in Pakistan. The federal minister said he has received reports that six of the arrested suspects have deep ties with an extremist group that is working against the Egyptian Government and is involved in subversive activities.

Protests Held Against 'Genocidal War' in Kashmir

BK0112141095 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 1 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Massive demonstrations were held throughout Indian-held Kashmir after Juma'h [Friday, 1 December] congregation today to protest against increasing atrocities by Indian occupation forces, raising slogans against the repressive operations carried by Indian authorities. The demonstrators called upon the international community to respond urgently to an undeclared genocidal war during which the Indian troops have killed nearly 50,000 civilian Kashmiris. They said India must be persuaded to give up its inhuman policies in the valley and fulfill its promise to hold a plebiscite to determine the actual wishes of the Kashmiri people. The protesters blocked the Srinagar-Jammu road to protest against the indiscriminate arrests. The Indian troops opened fire to disperse the demonstrators, injuring a number of them. Reports said Indian troops besieged various localities of Srinagar, Sopor, Baramulla, and Pulwama and subjected the people to severe torture. A number of people, mostly youth, were rounded up during the operations. The mujahedin in retaliation attacked Indian military targets and inflicted heavy casualties on the troops.

Over a dozen writ petitions have been filed in local courts of Srinagar against missing youth, reports Ghulam Nabi Khayal:

[Begin Khayal recording] More Kashmiri youths are reported to be missing after they were arrested by the Indian forces during search operations across Kashmir valley. One of them, Ghulam Ahmad Dar, who was picked up along with eight others as back as in November 1990 in Bandipura in northwest of the valley, is yet to be traced out despite a lapse of five years of his so-called detention. Another youth Farooq Khan, hailing from the same area, is also missing since October 1992 when he was rounded up by the Bihar Regiment of Indian Army. His wife has now lodged a writ petition in the state high court. The parents of all these youths have apprehensions that they might have been done to death during interrogation. In one case, one

Abdul Hameed Mir of Trehgam in Kupwara was taken into custody in March 1994. The forces subsequently arrested his father Assadullah Mir, who was allegedly beaten to death in custody. The whereabouts of Hameed are still not known. Only last Monday, one 24-year-old Abdur Rashid Shah also died of acute renal failure in a hospital here. He had been tortured after his arrest which severely damaged both his kidneys. About one dozen writ petitions have been filed in the high court for tracing out missing youths in custody. According to a local human rights organization, more than 500 people have been killed in custody and hundreds are still missing after they were picked up by the forces during last six years. Ghulam Nabi Khayal for PTV news, Srinagar. [end recording]

Committee Reviews Utilization of Foreign Aid

BK0412152095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Economic Coordination Committee [ECC] of the cabinet in its meeting in Islamabad today reviewed the movement and availability of essential commodities in the country. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto presided. It noted with satisfaction that special arrangements have been made to ensure the availability of essential kitchen items at reasonable prices. [passage omitted]

It also took stock of utilization of the foreign economic assistance. It was informed that project aid in pipeline at the beginning of the current fiscal year was \$9.36 billion. Fresh aid committed during the year amounted to \$2.713 billion, which was the highest level since the start of aid to Pakistan. It was 49 percent higher than the previous year. An amount of \$2.079 billion was disbursed during 1994-95 against available aid, compared to \$1.960 billion utilized during 1993-94. The utilization rate has thus risen to 18.9 percent which was the highest since 1989-90.

The ECC also considered a report on the country's monetary and credit situation and directed that domestic credit liquidity and credit expansion should be kept within the limits envisaged in the credit plan for the current year. The meeting also directed that appropriate flood protection arrangements should be made on permanent basis to minimize the damage caused by floods.

Prime Minister Meets Stock Market Presidents

BK0412121495 Islamabad THE NATION in English 4 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by M. Aftab]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — President of the three stock markets of Pakistan came back from

their meeting with Prime Minister [PM] Benazir Bhutto impressed that she will help the market out of its present doomsday scenario.

"The Prime Minister showed keen interest in the development of the stock market," Mr Sirajuddin Qasim, Dr Yasir Mahmood, and Mr Tariq Iqbal Khan, Presidents of the Stock Exchanges at Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad said at a joint news conference.

In the 60-minute meeting in response to their S.O.S., Ms Bhutto apparently conceded two demands and asked her officials to examine four more.

Ms Bhutto directed that the share proceeds of National Investment Trust (NIT), Investment Corporation of Pakistan (ICP), and Life Insurance Corporation (SLIC), out of the privatisation fund be released to these institutions, "for investment at their own discretion," the three Presidents said. These funds with the Privatisation Commission approximately include Rs [rupees] 400 million for ICP, and almost the same amount for SLIC, Mr Tariq Iqbal Khan told the journalists. That will total around Rs 860 million.

In case all of that money is pumped into stocks, will there be a sign of cheer on the paled, gloomy face of the stock market?

Mr Qasim said, "At least that will be something."

The second demand Ms Bhutto accepted is to give a "correct interpretation of prudential regulations regarding loans obtained on shares of listed companies."

The four other demands the Presidents made were:

- Two-way convertibility of PTC [Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation] Vouchers into GDRs [guaranteed drawing rights], and vice versa.
- Reactivation of investors scheme by ICP.
- Withdrawal of 10 percent Tax on bonus share issues.
- Treatment of capital gains of insurance companies at par with other investors.

These four demands are "under examination," said Mr V.A. Jaffery, Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance and Economic Affairs, when asked to confirm their status.

Mr Shamim Ahmad Khan, Chairman, Corporate Law Authority (CLA), will chair a committee to make recommendations on these and other issues raised by the three presidents, within the next 48 hours.

Ms. Bhutto assured the group that the privatisation of Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation (PTC) is being expedited to have the strategic investors in place by March 31, 1996.

What are you taking back home to your stock exchanges from today's meeting? There was a long pause, and then they said, "We have made a beginning. We had to start somewhere."

A correspondent asked: Aren't the present woes of the stock market the result of your own mismanagement?

"Even the government does not think like that," said Mr. Qasim.

The President proposed that the sale proceeds of the denationalised units and the funds with the Privatisation Commission should be used to support the stock market, and to create a Market Support Fund (MSF). It does not seem to be possible, but it will be examined, they were informed by the PM. The stock exchange management said they have no figure in mind for the size of the proposed MSF.

Another proposal was to amend the relevant legislation to enable investment of Employees Old Age or pension funds in stocks. It will be examined. Asked what is the moral or legal justification for investment of pension funds in a highly volatile stock market, the Presidents said it can be done with proper safeguards and only a part of the funds can be invested.

Mr. Qasim said, "The stock market is facing the liquidity crisis. The banks have virtually no margin to advance money for stocks. Some banks demand to maintain a higher margin than others. The liquidity problem arose because several large stocks were floated last year which absorbed a great deal of money."

Dr. Yasir Mahmood reminded the journalists that flotation of \$900 million PTC vouchers which equals around Rs 36 billion, alone, was the biggest flotation of the year in Asia, excluding Japan.

Mr Qasim said if the government encourages some liquidity than private investors will also come into the market.

He said, "The government is upset over the extent to which the market has gone down recently, but it believes that the fundamentals of the economy are getting better. If the cotton crop is good, at least one sector of the economy — textiles — will be better off."

Asked as to how far the poor law and order situation, particularly in Karachi, has hit the market, Mr Qasim said, "It is a factor. But production, by and large, is going on, although low attendance in factories affects production."

Asked as to what the government's response towards their proposals, Mr Qasim said, "Very positive." The government will examine a number of legal hurdles for investment to go into stocks and equities, but even if

the progress from the government side on these matters is gradual, it will still improve the market."

Mr Yasir Mahmood said the stock market should depend more on investment by Pakistanis, rather than inflow of foreign investment which is highly volatile, mercurial, and can be quickly withdrawn for placement in more lucrative markets for short term benefits. This tendency to make a quick buck cannot provide a solid basis for longer term investment which comes only through domestic investment which also provides stability to the market. "Don't depend on foreign investment in stocks," was his message. He said out of 140 million people in Pakistan only one percent of the population, or 1.4 million people, hold stocks. In India, 6 percent population holds stocks. In order to encourage small investors, the government should resume plans for investment allowance, which should be particularly attractive and beneficial for small investors.

Mr Mahmood said the savings rate in Pakistan is 14 percent while it is 18 to 19 percent in India. Savings must be encouraged. He thought, with a number of stocks at their lowest at the moment, this is the best time to invest. The three Presidents were of the view that Mutual Funds would be floated and developed to promote investment and benefit a large number of shareholders.

Government To Bail Out Stock Market From Crisis

BK0512074595 Islamabad THE NEWS in English
5 Dec 95 p 7

[Editorial: "Stock Market Bail Out"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has decided to bail out the stock market from its present crisis. In a meeting with the presidents of the three stock exchanges, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto agreed to release funds from public sector channels, including National Investment Trust and Investment Corporation of Pakistan, to make up for the liquidity crunch which triggered off the sinking of the market. A special committee has also been set up to sort out matters which the bourse chiefs thought could help the market to recover. In accepting the demands of the stock market chiefs the government has responded to their distress call to rescue the market.

There is no single cause for the stock market crisis. Generally, a market grows with the expansion of the economy. But the country's stocks are in bad shape. More than 400 textile mills are closed, while there is a virtual stalemate in the manufacturing sector. The savings rate is low, and only a small part of savings is invested in the stock market. All these factors lead to a

stringent liquidity situation. And whatever liquidity was available in the market, had been absorbed by the large issues offered in the latter half of last year, the PTC [Pakistan Telecommunications Corporation] vouchers issue being the topmost. Another part which came from foreign funds was also withdrawn during the last days of the crisis.

What, however, worsened the situation was the wave of negative projection of the country's economy that swept through the media last week. There were wild rumors about freezing foreign currency accounts, bank deposits and lockers and further devaluation of the rupee. In one case, the closure of a foreign bank's branch in a dispute with the Central Board of Revenue is stated to have fanned the flames of speculation.

It is against this background that the government has agreed to help the market with the release of necessary funds. But the sources of these funds being mainly privatization proceeds, remain questionable. The government has to find a way out to deal with this aspect. Most of the other demands are genuine and one can hope that the special committee would, dispose of them favorable.

But will the government's intervention — ironically sought by the business leaders in a free market operation — solve the problem once and for all? Is there any guarantee that the public funds will remain safe and that a similar situation will not arise in the future? Have not the market leaders a role in this respect? If they notice the market overheating at times, like last year, can they not opt for a self-correcting mechanism? The main watchdog should have been the Corporate Law Authority, which has, sadly, remained a silent spectator.

Editorial Views 'Perception' of Financial Sector

*BK0212110495 Islamabad THE NATION in English
2 Dec 95 p 6*

[Editorial: "Performance of Economy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr V A Jaffery, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance, placed the entire blame for the current crisis in the financial sector on what he termed as 'rumours'. While there is little doubt about the fact that an intangible factor, as a rumour, can create a perception that can have disastrous implications for a country's financial markets, as investor confidence can erode overnight leaving stocks at a fraction of their original value, yet many believe that there is no smoke without a fire. There are those who argue that the government is facing a crisis given the fact that the IMF has frozen the second tranche payment of the three-year Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) signed in 1994

because of the government's inability to meet any of its targets. To counter this argument Mr Jaffery can refer to the statement made by Paul Chabrier IMF Director for the Middle East that "last week the Pakistan authorities reached understandings with the staff of the IMF on a far reaching programme... this programme will be submitted to the IMF's executive board. Effective implementation of this programme should... pave the way for Pakistan's early return of ESAF programme." There is thus hope that the Government of Pakistan might, at a future date, dispel IMF's concern about its commitment towards reform, ascertainable by its ability to meet agreed targets.

The IMF's statement can be seen in the light of extending support to the government so as to negate the rumours by 'vested interests' within Pakistan which could have caused the crash at the stock market. There is no doubt about the veracity of Mr Jaffery's claims that a government cannot go bankrupt because it controls the mint; that the government has not frozen any expenditure but exhorted the ministries and departments to get approval from the financial advisors; and that foreign exchange regulations are not being changed. However, now that public hysteria may have died down somewhat, Mr Jaffery would do well to effect reforms that would be meaningful because nothing can be as effective a deterrent to rumours as a normally functioning economy.

State Bank Chief Disperses 'Rumors' on Economy

*BK0212122895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network
in English 1100 GMT 2 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The state bank governor, Dr. Mohammad Yakub, has said the fundamentals of the country's economy are strong and in good shape with high level of foreign exchange reserves in hand. In interview in Karachi today, he said the country has cash foreign exchange reserves of \$1.2 billion, in addition to its gold reserves of \$800 million and a credit line of \$600 million. He said there should be no reason to create and weaken the economy of the country by spreading baseless rumors. He also said that the cotton and rice crops are expected to be good and the growth rate during this fiscal year can reach between 6 to 6.5 percent. Steps have also been taken to contain inflation and expand exports and reduce money supply from 17 percent during the last year to less than 13 percent in the fiscal year 1995-96.

The State Bank governor strongly dispelled rumors about bouncing of checks, freeing of foreign currency accounts or sealing of private lockers. He said similarly there is no question of demonetization of notes of any denomination.

Prime Minister Adviser: Economy in 'Good Health'
BK0412114795 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST
in English 4 Dec 95 p 12

[Unattributed article: "Economy in Good Health: Jaffarey"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad (APP) — Advisor to the prime minister on finance and economic affairs, V.A. Jaffarey said Sunday [3 December] the economy was in good health and the economic growth rate was much faster than last year.

Dispelling "rumours" being spread by a section of the press about the economy, he informed journalists, "we have prospects of a high growth rate in the on-going year", adding growth rate is one of the fundamentals of any economy.

"The current uncertainty reflected in the newspaper reports is unjustified by fundamentals of economics". The criticism on measures taken by the government is acceptable and justified, but publication of completely "false rumours" causes anxiety and damages the economy, Jaffarey added.

The 1,000 rupee [Rs] note was not being demonetised, he said, adding, "the whole thing was to create lack of confidence in the currency".

About the news that the government was planning to freeze foreign exchange accounts he said "we will not do it, we cannot do it".

He said the report about the resignation of the governor State Bank was also speculative.

Jaffarey said when he was recently holding meetings with the IMF in Washington, a leading Pakistani newspaper published a report that IMF was unhappy with the issuance of Rs25,000 prize bonds.

When he asked IMF officials, why they did not ask him, they replied, "we don't know any prize bond and don't know the correspondent of the leading newspaper, and we are not authorised to speak to newsmen".

Giving indicators of the economy, Jaffarey said the agriculture was expected to grow by 6.2 percent against less than five percent last year, a bigger cotton crop is also expected as compared to last year.

The sale of fertiliser during current rabi season was about 70 percent higher, "so the prospects of rabi crop are good".

He said industry in the last four months also showed upward swing: Cigarettes industry grew by 25 percent, jute goods 18 percent, nitrogen 10 percent, chemicals

25 percent, motorcycle 1.7 percent and yarn production increased by 24 percent.

However, the textile industry did not increase as much as it should have been. About the Balance of Payments he said it was true that in the first four months we had deficit in the trade account, which affected the foreign exchange balances. But in late October the government took corrective measures and "we will be able to attain export target of nine billion dollar set at the beginning of the year. "The imports will be a little less than the target".

He said now the reserves have stabilised at about 1.2 billion dollars, besides 800 million dollar of gold, and 1.8 billion dollar of export bills. He said the external position has been strengthened because standby arrangements were made with IMF.

He said recently there was a withdrawal in the foreign currency accounts by small depositors, due to rumours that the foreign exchange deposits were being frozen. The withdrawal was by small depositors, therefore the situation was "not alarming".

On fiscal side the government has decided to reduce the budget deficit to 4.6 percent, which is more than the initial target of five percent. This will not only help correct Balance of Payments, but will also bring inflation under control to some extent.

Jaffarey accepted that inflation is still high, but it was 12.2 in the first four months of current year, compared to 13.2 percent last year. He hoped the inflation would be brought down to 10 percent.

Sri Lanka

Government To Raise Flag Over Jaffna City

BK0512020995 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
5 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Sri Lankan Lion flag will fly high again over Jaffna town today, signifying the end of its dominance and control by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE].

THE LION FLAG will fly high again in Jaffna city today (Tuesday [5 December]), signifying the end of its dominance and control by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Informed sources said an official flag-raising ceremony will be held around 10.30 a.m. today in Jaffna to mark the historic victory of Sri Lankan troops who bravely marched forward to regain the former Tiger stronghold and usher in sunshine (Riviresa) to the Jaffna peninsula.

The ceremony will be broadcast live on state radio and television. President Chandrika Kumaratunga will address the nation tomorrow.

"This is a momentous occasion for the security forces and the people. While celebrating the liberation of Jaffna from a ruthless group of terrorists, we should pause for a moment and reflect on the immense sacrifices made by hundreds of security forces personnel who laid down their lives to ensure our victory," a senior military officer said.

He said the fall of Jaffna is a severe psychological blow to the LTTE, who have previously vowed that the Sri Lankan army would not be allowed to move even one inch forward from Palaly. "The offensive has weakened them militarily, shaken their rank and file to the core and removed the LTTE's aura of invincibility," he said. More than 1,900 rebels have been killed and over 3,000 injured in the offensive according to military estimates.

Operation Riviresa, one of the biggest and most successful military campaigns in the protracted North-east crisis, was designed to regain the Tiger stronghold of Jaffna and dismantle their administrative structures. The army took 48 days to complete the total capture of the city, which most Tigers had fled in the face of advancing soldiers. The LTTE's forced evacuation of civilians also enabled the army to conduct the offensive without causing civilian casualties.

It commenced on October 17 when thousands of troops from three divisions backed by aircover, armour and artillery broke out of their Forward Defended Localities (FDLs) outside the Palaly military complex in the Valikamam division of the Jaffna peninsula and moved southwards towards Jaffna.

Meanwhile in the centre of Jaffna yesterday, an explosion probably activated by a timing device destroyed one side of the two-storeyed Jaffna Kachcheri building as victorious Riviresa troops began flushing out remaining LTTE cadres in the Jaffna city and defusing a labyrinth of booby traps and mines.

The operational headquarters of the ministry of defence said no troops were injured in the blast which occurred around 1145 hours.

Troops began a house-to-house search for possible hidden explosives and surviving tigers in the heavily built up part of Jaffna city yesterday. "The LTTE leaders had fled Jaffna leaving behind the inexperienced cadres to face the music," a military commander said.

Troops encountered stiff resistance from Tigers braced for a last ditch battle when they entered the city limits about ten days ago. Troops had to inch their way

towards the city centre through a maze of booby traps and minefields since then. There was fierce fighting last Friday and resistance waned after the fall of Jaffna Fort area to the forces on Saturday morning.

Although the security forces faced no resistance yesterday, a number of LTTE cadres are believed to be still holed up in buildings awaiting the chance to trigger blasts to cause the maximum casualties to troops.

Troops are attending to the needs of more than 400 civilians who defied LTTE orders to evacuate and preferred to remain at St. Patrick's College, St. Mary's College and the Seminary.

Officially Raises Flag Marking 'Victory'

*BK0512070495 Hong Kong AFP in English
0641 GMT 5 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Dec 5 (AFP) — The Sri Lankan authorities Tuesday [5 December] formally announced the capture of the Tamil Tiger capital of Jaffna after nearly 50 days of fighting which left 2,500 people dead on both sides.

State radio gave a live commentary on the national flag hoisting in Jaffna, 396 kilometers (247 miles) north of Colombo, symbolically marking the victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Security forces captured Jaffna on Saturday, the 47th day of Sri Lanka's biggest military campaign against the LTTE which had ruled Jaffna as the capital of a de facto separate state since 1990.

Editorial Cautions Nations on LTTE Lobbies

*BK0512015195 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
5 Dec 95*

[Editorial: "Don't 'Ride the Tiger'" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Learning of the imminent re-taking of Jaffna town by the Lankan military, desperate Eelam lobbyists abroad have reportedly stepped-up a disinformation campaign in regard to the situation in this country.

Reports from Kuala Lumpur indicate that scores of such lobbyists posing as human rights activists had handed over a letter to UN officials there, claiming that Tamil citizens in Jaffna were being "annihilated." They demanded UN intervention to defuse the purported crisis.

Such canards are unlikely to find favour with the more enlightened sections of the international community which have long since recognized the LTTE [Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam] for what it is - a band of unrepentant killers for whom the term peace is anathema. The unilateral breaking of the ceasefire by the Tigers on April 19 and their subsequent rejection of the peace package put forward by President Kumaratunga to solve the ethnic conflict, which has been accepted by all moderate Tamil parties and a considerable number of Western countries, were only the beginning of this process of realization. Personal moves by President Kumaratunga during her recent visit to the UN to put the record straight on the situation in the country and her ability to convince the West about the motives and character of the LTTE and its backers abroad, have won for the Sri Lankan state unprecedented international backing in its peace efforts.

Since then, important Western states such as the U.S., Britain and Canada have decried the mindless butchery by the LTTE in Sri Lanka's border villages. They have in one voice condemned the killing of innocent men, women and children by these ravenous militarists. They have also seen and heard the devastation and bloodshed triggered in Southern Sri Lanka by LTTE "human bombs," which are apparently 'programmed' to kill unarmed civilians and non-combatants.

The world can also see for itself the exemplary manner in which the Lankan military is conducting its campaign in the North. Civilians are cared for and provided relief by the state as soon as possible. Places of religious worship are protected and handled sensitively by the state.

A disinformation campaign alleging "annihilation" of Tamil civilians is, therefore, best scoffed at by the international community. The world outside including human rights groups should, on the other hand, take cognizance of the human rights violations being perpetrated by the LTTE in the operational areas. Civilians who only want peace, are being used as human shields by the Tigers and forcibly evacuated to achieve military and strategic objectives. Children, hardly in their teens, are being brutalized and coerced to join the LTTE fighting cadres which are very often unleashed on sleeping women and children in Lanka's border regions. All this the world knows and couldn't afford to take lightly.

Now that the Lankan state can re-exercise its writ over Jaffna, the authorities can offer to resume peace talks with the Tigers provided they seriously consider the peace package. The war, after all, was forced on the state by the LTTE, and the primary motive of the state was to find a political solution to the ethnic crisis, via a devolution package.

There is also no question of there being any international intervention in the current situation which is entirely

internal to the Lankan state. Intransigence on the part of a band of terrorists necessitated the present military operation by Lanka's law enforcement machinery. This is only a prelude to the political process.

Countries with the so-called Eelam lobbies, on the other hand, are best advised to keep a close tab and contain such bodies because they may be unwittingly helping a terrorist organization which has not only cruelly snuffed out the life of a Lankan president and other local political leaders but also brutally assassinated former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi. Let no peace-loving country be guilty of "riding the Tiger."

'Opulent Lifestyle' of Tiger Leader Criticized

BK0212091195 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
2 Dec 95

[Editorial: "The Tiger's Lair" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Besides exploding more than the decades-long myth about the invincibility of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], advancing Lankan troops in the North have succeeded in unmasking and exposing the real aspirations of the Tiger leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, through the capture of what is described as his palace.

The plush two-storeyed mansion which was seized by the military in the vicinity of the Nallur Kovil within Jaffna town limits, graphically reveals the opulent lifestyle of this folk hero revered in certain circles. Yesterday we quoted military sources as describing this 'Tiger lair' as a castle, replete with luxuriously furnished drawing and bed rooms, marble floor, intricate wood panelling on walls and the like.

This important expose provokes some thoughts. It looks as if the Tiger leader and his gang have been deceiving the northern people, particularly the susceptible youth. Some of the latter appear to have laid down their lives for "the cause" in the mistaken belief that they were creating a better tomorrow for their community while all the time their leaders were only using the movement for national liberation for their own interests.

The evidence gathered so far clearly points to the fact that the secessionist movement in the North is being used to feed the megalomaniac ambitions of Prabhakaran. 'The castle' only shows the partiality for affluence and personal wealth the Tiger himself has succumbed to. It is the same old story of the 'liberators' of the people turning out to become their oppressors.

Followers of Prabhakaran and those who are enamoured of him would do well to pause and ponder: Isn't the LTTE leadership destabilizing the Lankan state and

continuing a murderous separatist revolt merely to build a tyrannised Tamil fiefdom over which Prabhakaran and Prabhakaran only will have a stranglehold? It is to be hoped that sane counsel will prevail, even at this late stage, among those who have been deceived by Prabhakaran and that they would reject him and the LTTE's self-serving ideology.

We had the case of the JVP [Janatha Vimukhti Peramuna — former Sinhalese insurgency] leadership which too lived in the lap of luxury even while inciting its followers to engage in murderous violence and subversion. Money extorted from the common people apparently went to swell the private bank accounts of the JVP leaders. The same process appears to be at work in the North.

Whether the Tiger leadership can ever recover from this loss of face remains to be seen. But disillusion in the rank and file must necessarily follow from this exposure.

Restrictions Eased on Movement of Civilians

*BK0312093595 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER
in English 3 Dec 95*

[Report by T. Vivekarasa — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Restrictions on movement further south imposed on civilians arriving in Vavuniya from the North have now been relaxed following discussions between Tamil parliamentarians and the Vavuniya GA [government agent] and the security authorities.

Earlier, security considerations had compelled the security authorities to restrict civilians arriving from the North to the Vavuniya area. Discussions held by the PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam] Vavuniya district MPs with the defence officials and administrators have resulted in new procedures which will enable civilians to travel further south after careful vetting, the 'Sunday Observer' learns. The new procedure came into force yesterday.

Under the new procedure, travelling passes are being issued under certain conditions after certification by the authorities concerned. Those who were registered with police stations in Colombo will be issued with passes on submission of their police registration documents. Colombo-based relatives will be required to go to Vavuniya and vouch for those persons wishing to go to Colombo but who do not have the necessary police registration.

Those who want to go to Colombo for medical purposes will be permitted if the Vavuniya DMO [district magistrate officer] certifies their case.

Similarly, those travelling south on official matters would be issued with passes if the official agency concerned makes the necessary recommendations.

Those who wish to stay with their relatives or friends in Vavuniya may do so after the Vavuniya residents concerned certifies their 'bona fides' along with certification by the Grama Niladhari [village social service organization].

Tamil Political Parties Stress Return of Refugees

*BK0312094495 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER
in English 3 Dec 95*

[Report by S. Selvakumar — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As the Security Forces begin establishing control of Jaffna city, Tamil political parties are expressing cautious optimism about the resumption of civilian political activity in the Jaffna peninsula and calling for equal priority to the refugee problem alongside the implementation of the Government's devolution package. Leaders of Tamil political parties surveyed by the 'Sunday Observer' said that they were waiting for the return of civilians to their homes in the Jaffna peninsula so that they may re-establish their political presence there.

Warning that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] would block the return of hundreds of thousands of civilians, now displaced by the fighting, Tamil political party representatives said that all efforts had to be made to bring the people back to Jaffna city and other towns they had to abandon in the peninsula.

"If the Government takes the necessary action and convinces the people that a political solution to the ethnic crisis is in sight, people could be persuaded to return home," People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) leader Dharmalingam Siddharthan told the 'Sunday Observer'.

Asked whether the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) would start its political activities once again in familiar terrain, its leader Mr. M. Sivasithamparam said that his party would not indulge in political activities at this juncture. He said that the resettlement of refugees and finding a political solution to the ethnic crisis would be a must before the TULF ventured into any political activity in the Jaffna peninsula.

TULF General Secretary R. Sampanthan said that the Government should alleviate the immense human suffering as a matter of great urgency and in the widest possible way. PLOTE leader Dharmalingam Siddharthan said that his party would recommence political activities in Jaffna only after the resettlement of all refugees.

"The government should at least convince the people of Jaffna that it is working towards finding a permanent political solution," he said. He pointed out that Jaffna is virtually empty now and merely capturing Jaffna was certainly not going to bring about the expected peace.

Pointing out that the LTTE would not allow the people to be resettled, he said that the resettlement of the refugees and finding a political solution should go hand in hand though it was going to be a long drawn-out process. "The Government should convince the people that life in cleared areas would be far better for them than in areas under Tiger control," he added.

The Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) however feels that the government should have first consulted the Tamil parties before launching the present war and have obtained their views as to how the refugees could have been settled. "Any government knows that there will be a refugee situation during a war. But we don't know whether the government has already drawn up a plan to resettle the refugees," EPRLF General Secretary, Suresh Premachandran said.

Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) leader M.K. Sivajilingam feels that the LTTE should be drawn

into the mainstream of politics. He recalled the IPKF [Indian Peacekeeping Force] experience where all other parties wanted the Peace Accord implemented while the LTTE was waging a war with the IPKF.

TELO leader also agreed that there should be a ceasefire with the LTTE before resettling the refugees and expressed pessimism at starting political activities in the peninsula without a political solution to the ethnic problem.

The Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) had a slightly different view of the position. Its spokesman Jaffna District MP A. Nadarajah was of the view that the government need not bother whether the LTTE enters democratic path or not. Without waiting for the LTTE, the government should implement the political package it has already announced, he added.

He also added that the President today militarily holds the upper hand over the LTTE and should make this the opportunity to implement the political package. On the question of resettling the refugees he said that the Government should enlist the cooperation of the NGOs [nongovernmental organizations].

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